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TORONTO

DEMOCRACY AND LABOUR

A SEQUEL TO
"DEMOCRACY AT THE CROSSWAYS"

BY

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TO
ALL CONSTITUTIONAL
WORKING MEN AND WOMEN

“It is a privilege to live in this age of rapid and brilliant events. What an error to consider it a utilitarian age! It is one of infinite romance. Thrones tumble down, and crowns are offered like a fairy tale. *Vive la bagatelle!* Adieu.”

BENJAMIN DISRAELI, 1862.

PREFACE

HALF a decade ago, in that cardinal year 1918, I wrote a rather long book entitled *Democracy at the Crossways*. Its purpose was to offer for the consideration of the newly enlarged electorate some principles which seemed to me to be based on the lessons of history and the conclusions of political science. The book did not please every one: it was not intended to do so. But on the whole its reception was gratifying. In particular, it was pleasing to find that, however emphatically critics might dissent from the opinions which it expressed, they did not attempt to impugn the accuracy of its statement of facts.

One result of the publication of *Democracy at the Crossways* was that I was invited to address large assemblies of working men up and down the country—*e.g.* Glasgow, Liverpool, Cardiff, Stockport, Gravesend, Halifax, Southampton, Hull—on themes related to Politics and Labour. I found these meetings intensely interesting, and I think that I learned a good deal from the frank yet friendly discussions which took place. I came back to London with the conviction that Socialism and its offshoots have no

real hold on the English working man, and no very strong hold on the working man of Scotland and Wales. On the contrary, I perceived a deep and widespread resentment at the control which Socialist Societies had secured over Trade Union executives and funds, and a general desire to obtain emancipation from the thralldom of the Labour Party's political levy.

In the course of my peregrinations I was frequently asked to arrange, if possible, for the publication of a cheap popular edition of *Democracy at the Crossways*. Efforts were made to comply with this request; but the cost of printing and paper proved to be prohibitive. Moreover, I came to realise more and more as time went on that large sections of that book were more suited to the needs of students than to the requirements of the man in the street. Hence, finally, I decided to abandon the project of issuing either a cheap reprint of my large book, or a volume of extracts from it; and instead of doing so to write an entirely new and much shorter work embodying the main conclusions of *Democracy at the Crossways*, but incorporating also a large amount of fresh material accumulated during the five years 1918-1923. The present volume is the result.

Democracy and Labour is based on a course of lectures which I made, and delivered twice, during the summer of the present year to select audiences of Trade Unionists and others. It has, I hope, profited much by the keen discussions which followed the delivery of the lectures. Omitting the detailed treat-

ment of early democratic history and abstract democratic theory, it deals with two main questions, viz. (1) the question of democratic procedure, and (2) the question of democratic policy. Under the first head it is especially concerned to defend constitutional method against the method of "direct action"; under the second it is devoted to a plea for personal freedom, individual enterprise, and private property, as against the communistic proposals of Socialists, Syndicalists, and Anarchists.

I sincerely hope that the tone of this book will not give offence even to those whose opinions it criticises most adversely, or whose policy it opposes most strongly. This is a time when plain speaking is urgently required; but plain speaking ought not to imply personal antagonisms, or any imputations of moral depravity. It is possible, however, that my very emphatic convictions, combined with my strenuous efforts after brevity, may have given an appearance of asperity to some of my remarks. If so, may I apologise in advance?

F. J. C. HEARNshaw.

LONDON,
31st December 1923.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"We are on the eve of the Proletarian Revolution."—Mr. ROBERT WILLIAMS (March 1919).

"Is it possible to use what our French friends call *l'action directe* ?"—Mr. ROBERT WILLIAMS (April 1919).

"Direct Action is War."—Mr. RAMSAY MACDONALD.

"There is a real and dangerous revolutionary element in the United Kingdom."—Professor E. V. ARNOLD.

"Every revolution that does not spread to England is a storm in a teacup."—KARL MARX.

"A revolution in England would condemn millions to actual death by starvation."—Dean INGE (July 1921).

§ 1. "*Democracy at the Crossways.*"

THE year 1918 will probably be regarded by future historians as one of the most critical in the records of the human race. On the one hand, it saw the climax and conclusion of the Great War, on the issue of which depended the destiny of mankind. On the other hand, it witnessed the disappearance from the political theatre of the three autocrats whose titles and prerogatives had perpetuated in Modern Europe the despotic tradition of the defunct Roman Empire: the last of the Romanov Tsars was murdered by the Bolsheviks in July; the last of the Hohenzollern Kaisers fled, though no man pursued, in November; and at the same time the last of the Habsburg

Emperors took refuge—as a very commonplace tourist, in a Swiss hotel—from the popular explosion which shattered his “ramshackle empire” into fragments.

Never before had the issue of democracy *versus* autocracy been so clearly and so sharply joined as it was in this cataclysmal year. For it had by this time become evident that, whatever might have seemed to be the immediate or superficial causes of the great conflict, the ultimate and deep matters at stake were the ideas and ideals which separated the self-governing peoples of the world from those still beneath the tutelage of military monarchs. Definite statements from great Allied leaders had announced that the supreme objects of the War were “to obtain security for the democratic governments of the earth,” and “to make the world safe for democracy.” Solemn warnings had been uttered, when the fortunes of the Allies were at a low ebb, to the effect that defeat would mean irreparable disaster to the cause of constitutionalism. “Democracy,” said a British Cabinet minister, “is at one and the same time on its trial and in the crucible. If this War is lost by the Allies the cause of democracy is under eclipse for generations to come, and we leave to our children a heritage of trouble.”

Never before had so vast an issue hung so doubtfully in the balance as it did in the early part of the year, and never before had fortune changed so spectacularly, or moved so rapidly and decisively to a culminating crisis, as it did during its autumn months. To the student of modern European history, whose work largely centres round the triple alliances and triangular duels of the great imperial

Houses of Habsburg, Romanov, and Hohenzollern, the simultaneous elimination of the three Kaisers, and the disintegration of their dominions, marked a veritable end of an epoch. It seemed to symbolise the overthrow of antiquated despotism, the dethronement of militarism, the final defeat of dynastic ambition, the deliverance of a troubled world from diplomatic intrigue and imperialist aggression. It held out the hope of the advent of a new age marked by international amity, social solidarity, established peace, federated peoples, and universal law. The nightmare menace of German world-dominion was over; the hectic era of the race for armaments had reached its limit; the day of liberty, equality, and fraternity had at last arisen. So it appeared. Youthful optimists began to sing odes to liberty in the spirit of Wordsworth's famous lines:

Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
But to be young was very heaven.

There were, however, some disquieting symptoms. The process of making the world safe for democracy had revealed the fact that democracy was not as yet safe for the world. In every Allied State bands of Socialists, Syndicalists, and Anarchists were fomenting disorder and stirring up class war. In many of them irreconcilable groups of Nationalists, Separatists, and Schismatics were rousing rebellion and defying the general will. It was in Russia, however, that the most deadly menace to democracy displayed itself: no sooner had the peril of Prussianism been exorcised from the world than the seven-times more horrible demon of Bolshevism entered and took possession.

§ 2. *The Russian Revolutions.*

The Tsarist government fell in March 1917, because of its corruption and incompetence. Nicolas himself had no worse fault than feebleness; but he was surrounded and dominated by a camarilla of Germanophiles and degenerates whose machinations had paralysed the Russian arms, and had involved the nation in devastating disaster.

The March Revolution was effected, as a lamentable but inevitable necessity, by a coalition of various patriotic groups of democrats and reformers, comprising many statesmen of wide experience and tried sobriety of judgement, who were convinced that no remedy short of the removal of the weak-willed Tsar and his evil rulers could cure the deep-seated moral diseases of the Russian body politic. This Revolution, which was almost bloodless, was accomplished with the general, though profoundly regretful, consent not only of the army (which had suffered most under the old régime) but also of the vast body of the peoples of the empire. It resulted in an immediate purification of the public services, in a new zeal for the successful prosecution of the War, in the liberation of the trade unions, in the emancipation of the peasantry, in the restoration of the Duma to power. So long as it remained under the control of its moderate originators it appeared to be a wholly happy and hopeful movement, full of promise for the future. It recalled to students of history the "Glorious Revolution" which had established constitutional government in England in 1689, and the first radiant year of the French Revolution of 1789 when Mirabeau held sway. Said Viscount Grey: "A liberated Russia is a

splendid increase of freedom in the world, and, whatever the immediate and passing effect upon the progress of the War, the future effect upon democracy in Europe . . . must be most favourable, and of incalculable value."

The way of revolutions, however, is to pass out of the control of the comparatively moderate men who start them—a fact which should be carefully pondered by Labour leaders who play with "Direct Action." And just as the control of the French Revolution was snatched from the hands of constitutionalists and was ultimately captured—after brief periods of possession by Girondists and Jacobins—by a gang of devils incarnate, so was the control of the Russian Revolution torn from the grasp of Cadets and Reformers, and seized by that sinister group of Marxian extremists known as the Bolsheviks.

The Bolshevik Revolution of November 1917 was a revolt against democracy: the autocratic régime had been wholly swept away in the preceding March, and the organs of self-government both in politics and in industry had been brought into operation. The success of the revolt was due, first, to the lamentable incompetence of the Constitutional Government, which showed in an exaggerated form all the characteristic weaknesses of democracy—ignorance, vacillation, loquacity, indecision, corruption, disunion, bewilderment; secondly, to the energy and resolution of the small band of Marxian fanatics, led by Lenin and Trotsky, who cast aside all the restraints of mercy or scruple in their determination to seize power; thirdly, to the deadly machinations and lavish subsidies of the German militarists, who in their desperate extremity were prepared to employ any agents whatso-

ever in their frantic endeavours to break the ranks of their encircling foes. The triumphant Bolsheviks made, and still make, no secret of their contempt for democracy. They were, and are, a minority of less than one per cent imposing their will by remorseless terrorism on the helpless ninety-nine per cent. Said Lenin in December 1920 : " We have never spoken of liberty. We exercise the dictatorship of the proletariat in the name of a minority, because the peasant class in Russia is not proletariat, and is not yet with us. We shall exercise the dictatorship over them until they submit." Says Trotsky in his horrible but most illuminating *Defence of Terrorism* : " Democracy is a worthless and wretched masquerade. . . . We repudiate democracy in the name of the concentrated power of the proletariat. . . . Three times over hopeless is the idea of coming to power by the path of parliamentary democracy. There is only one way—to seize power." ¹

Thus was established in Russia the most sanguinary tyranny ever known, even in that unhappy country, since the days of Ivan the Terrible. Inspired by hatred, lust, greed, ambition, and all the most intensely individualistic passions of primitive savagery ; maintained by mercenary force and all the most frightful instruments of diabolical cruelty ; devoid of all capacity save that of self-defence, it keeps its strangle-hold upon the millions of its wretched victims. *Dumas* and *zemstvos*, organs of popular government, have been swept away ; co-operative societies and trade unions have been crushed into subjection ; labour is conscripted ; strikes are for-

¹ Trotsky, L., *Defence of Terrorism*. English Translation : Labour Publishing Co., 1921, pp. 10, 30, 35.

bidden ; the free press is abolished ; opposition and even criticism are punished by death ; commerce is ruined ; industry is paralysed ; religion is persecuted ; learning is suppressed ; only ignorance, crime, disease, death, and Marxian Socialism flourish.

Bolshevism is the dictatorship, not of the proletariat, but of the criminal classes. Far more than the despotism of Bomba does it deserve to be described as " The negation of God erected into a system."

§ 3. *Bolshevism in Britain.*

The triumph of the Bolshevik assault upon Russian democracy had its repercussion in many lands. In Germany, Austria, Hungary, Italy ; in Egypt, Turkey, Persia, India—everywhere it excited the lusts of the lawless, the hopes of the unbalanced, the passions of the depraved. Even in Britain, whose people, trained in an old and fine tradition of freedom and self-government, is commonly immune from the worst disorders of continental fanaticism, it had considerable influence. This was due partly to the fact that the true nature of Bolshevism was not at first perceived—it was mistaken for a genuine labour movement—and partly to the fact that the distressful conditions which followed the conclusion of the Great War caused a natural and inevitable unrest which lent itself to unscrupulous exploitation.

Even before the conclusion of the War, indeed, a so-called Soviet System was established in Britain, waiting only a favourable season to fructify and function. And even moderate labour leaders, such as Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. Philip Snowden, who certainly disapproved of it, were dragged into its

meshes—a suggestive indication of the helplessness of all so-called moderates in the day of revolution. In November 1918, the month of the Armistice, Mr. Robert Smillie, President of the Miners' Federation (the main hope of the Bolsheviks in Britain), made the announcement: "I am going to Blackburn to urge the workers there to refuse to recognise the Coalition Government, and to form a Soviet Government." In May 1919 Mr. John Maclean of Glasgow was appointed (apparently by Lenin and Trotsky) first President of the Soviet Republic of Great Britain. Next month the Clyde Workers' Soviet Committee, with which the new President was associated, formulated, but did not publish, its programme. The Home Office, however, obtained possession of a copy, which it caused to be printed in *The Times* of August 8, 1919. This programme was fully and fiercely Bolshevik in its provisions. It arranged for (1) "the disarming of all non-proletarian soldiers"; (2) "the seizure of arms and ammunition by the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils"; (3) "the arming of the entire labour population as a Red Army"; (4) "the creation of a Revolutionary Tribunal"; (5) "the immediate seizure of all means of subsistence"; (6) "the removal of Parliament and Municipal Councils"; (7) "the annulment of State debts and other debts"; (8) "the expropriation of all land, properties, funds and other securities now in the possession of the ruling and non-proletarian classes"; (9) "the expropriation of all banks, mines, industrial and commercial establishments"; and (10) the appropriation of "all means of communication, traffic, and means of transport." In order further to lure the proletariat to assist in this orgy of murder and loot, it promised

a six-hour day—presumably after the orgy was over—at seven pounds a week. It might as well have promised seventy, seven hundred, seven thousand, or seven million; for at the end of the orgy the pound sterling would have joined the rouble and the mark in perdition. Well may Mr. Graham Wallas remark: “Any one who has had much intercourse with those British or American artisans who have formed their habits of thought on popular expositions of Marxianism, must have met men and women, who, if they were in power, would feel themselves bound to show the same kind of scientifically conscientious ruthlessness as Lenin or Trotsky.”¹

That such men and women exist in Britain is clear from copious evidence beside the testimony of Mr. Graham Wallas. A crowded meeting, held in the Kingsway Hall on November 10, 1919, to celebrate the anniversary of the Leninist triumph, pledged itself “to help forward by all means in its power the world-wide Social Revolution of which the Russian workers and peasants are the gallant pioneers.” Prominent at this meeting, beside the Soviet President Maclean, were Mr. Robert Williams of the Transport Workers’ Union, Mr. Tom Mann of the Engineers, and Mr. C. T. Cramp of the National Union of Railwaymen. Mr. Robert Williams, indeed, had earlier in the year visited Lenin himself, had received from him a medal, and had returned with many complimentary messages to Mr. Robert Smillie of the Miners’ Federation. A year later (November 7, 1920), at another “Hands off Russia” assembly, held in the Albert Hall, Mr. C. L. Malone, M.P., distinguished (and extinguished) himself by saying to a highly excited

¹ Wallas, *Our Social Heritage*, p. 245.

Red audience: "Leave no stone unturned in preparing for the Social Revolution. The day is not far distant, I hope, when we shall meet to bless the British Revolution. When that day comes, woe to those people who get into our way! We are out to change the present constitution, and if it is necessary to save bloodshed and atrocities, we shall have to use the lamp-posts or the walls." The British Socialist Party, too, was in close touch with Lenin. It openly avowed its adhesion to his cause. "We of the B.S.P.," it proclaimed, "conceive it to be a high honour to be called Bolsheviks. The Bolsheviks are our noble Russian comrades . . . and we would welcome any assistance they could give us, either in the way of ideas, literature, or money."

The Bolshevik dictators were not slow to respond to the call for aid. They had at their disposal, still unexpended, the vast hordes of gold and jewelry which the general pillage of the Russian Empire had placed in their hands. They thought it worth while to spend it lavishly in the hope of being repaid a thousand-fold by the still vaster pillage of Great Britain—leaving to "the kindly British people" meanwhile the task of raising funds to relieve the famine which their own economic folly and moral depravity had aggravated.¹ They soon had over twelve hundred paid agents at work in Britain, and their grants in aid of revolution were estimated at £24,000 a month. They subsidised the *Daily Herald*, which they regarded as their own organ, with lavish prodigality; they made large promises to Miss Sylvia

¹ Cf. Karl Marx's message to the First International at Geneva in 1870: "England is the only country in which a real Socialist Revolution can be made. The English people cannot make this Revolution. Foreigners must make it for them."

Pankhurst on behalf of that still more lurid publication *The Workers' Dreadnought*. Wrote this grateful lady to Lenin in October 1920: "Dear Comrade—The situation here is moving in a revolutionary direction more-swiftly." But, of course, more Russian money was required! More Russian money came, and was available for any person, paper, or organisation which would prevent the establishment of industrial peace, foment disorder, and prepare the way to the great upheaval. At Lenin's command some thirty wrangling and raging Communist coteries in Britain were amalgamated (August 1920) to form the National Communist Party, in order the more economically to spend his money and the more effectively to do his work. But even this National Communistic amalgamation numbered only a few thousand lost souls. By themselves they were impotent. All they could do was to act as germ-cells to infect the masses of British Labour. It was to the great Trade Unions, and particularly to the Triple Alliance, that Lenin looked for the accomplishment of the Social Revolution.

§ 4. *Direct Action.*

Of all the devotees of the Social Revolution in Britain, Mr. Robert Williams of the Transport Workers' Union—the friend of Lenin and a member of the Third International—was in these critical days the most energetic and vociferous. In April 1921 he committed himself to writing in a book entitled *The New Labour Outlook* (Parsons, 4s. 6d. net). It is as clear and uncompromising a declaration of Bolshevism as one could desire or dread. It glorifies Lenin: he "will be honoured by posterity when the names of

the various individuals who 'won the war' will be hidden in merciful oblivion" (p. 145). It exalts the Third International, which "repudiates bourgeois democracy" and, having set "its mind on the practicability of World Revolution, . . . neither shudders at nor shrinks from the implications of an armed uprising, *i.e.* the possibility, nay, certainty, of sanguinary casualties" (pp. 150-153). It denounces Parliamentary Government as an "exploded myth" (p. 160), says "damn the Constitution" (p. 85), and proclaims Direct Action to be the path to proletarian ascendancy. "Direct Action," it asserts, "has left the propaganda stage, and has become part of the explicit plan and avowed programme of the British Labour Movement" (p. 134); and again, "Direct Action is the short cut to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" (p. 140); and once more, "Direct Action for political purposes, as has been shown over and over again, has captured the hearts and minds of the working-class" (p. 157).

Mr. Williams's reiterated assertion that Direct Action has definitely superseded Democracy as the political method of—he should not have said "the working-class," but—the Socialist Labour Party, was not without justification. For on June 27, 1919, the Labour Party's Conference at Southport had, by a card vote of 1,893,000 *v.* 935,000, accepted the policy of Direct Action—*i.e.* "the unreserved use of industrial power"—as a means of compelling the British Government to keep its "hands off Russia." This policy was confirmed by the Trade Union Congress held at Portsmouth in July 1920. It passed a resolution in favour of a general strike to force the Government to cease to oppose either the Bolsheviks in

Russia or the Sinn Feiners in Ireland, and it further instructed the affiliated unions to make the necessary preparations to carry through the strike. Next month (August 9-13, 1920), once again in the interests of the Russian Dictators, special emergency meetings of the Labour Party and the Trade Union executives were called, and a joint "Council of Action" was instituted—called reminiscently by one of its supporters a "Committee of National Security." The overthrow of Democracy and the advent of the Social Revolution seemed to be near. "Giving effect to this resolution," said one of the speakers, "does not mean a mere strike; it means a challenge to the whole Constitution of the country." That the force of this truth was appreciated was shown by the enthusiastic applause with which it was received. Nothing like it had been seen since, just six years earlier, the Germans had greeted the dawn of "Der Tag." In September 1920 it was decided to appoint a "General Staff" of thirty-two members, drawn from seventeen specified groups of industries, who should take over the conduct of the class war.

Said Mr. George Lansbury: "We urge our friends to be prepared to use the weapon of the strike in order to obtain control of national affairs." Said Mr. Tom Mann: "Rejoicing in the great and glorious achievements of the Russian Soviets, and admiring the fine tactics of the Irish Sinn Feiners, I desire to see the same tactics resorted to in Britain. I advocate Revolution openly." Such utterances as these were regarded by some ostrich-like philosophers as merely "little disturbances in the development of language."¹ The revolutionary strikes of 1919-1921,

¹ Burns, C. D., *Principles of Revolution*, p. 111.

however, showed how disastrously these philosophers were mistaken.

§ 5. *The Revolutionary Strikes of 1919.*

The year 1919 opened extremely ominously. The general election of the preceding month—the first held since 1910, and the first under the Representation Act of 1918—had dashed the hopes of the Socialist Labour Party. Of the 376 candidates whom it had presented to the new electorate no less than 317—an extraordinary assortment of militant suffragists, cosmopolitan pacifists, conscientious objectors, syndicalist deportees, revolutionary anarchists, and sanguinary rebels—had been decisively rejected by the discriminating voters. This veritable *débâcle* had made two things clear: one, that the so-called “Labour Party” had but small claim to represent genuine labour; the other, that if ever Socialism was to establish itself in Britain it would be, not by the vote of a majority, but by the violence of a minority. Hence the clamour against “bourgeois democracy” and the advocacy of the “direct action” of an illuminated oligarchy. Circumstances favoured militant methods. The services were disaffected: the vast new army, now that its task seemed to be accomplished, was restless with desire for demobilisation; the navy seethed with sedition engendered by disloyal “birds”; the police, agitated by a demand for a union which the Government necessarily declined to concede, appeared to be drifting towards revolt. The Class-War Lords, spurred on and assisted by their Bolshevik allies, fomented all this unrest, strove to bring the services into their Soviet system,

and confidently reckoned that when the day of revolution came, they could count on paralysing the resistance of the State. The *Daily Herald* showed exceptional assiduity in its cultivation of the soldiers and sailors, whom during the war it had denounced as the tools of Capitalism ; while it positively made pets of policemen who refused to perform the duties to which they were bound by oath.

But the unrest in the services was much exceeded by the unrest in the industrial world, which reached its acutest height in the executives of the Triple Alliance. The miners led by Mr. Smillie, the railway-men under Mr. Cramp, and the transport-workers beneath the banner of Mr. Williams, were frankly out for revolution. It was not that at that time industrial conditions were exceptionally bad. On the contrary, they were rather more than normally good. Wages were high ; hours were short ; trade was good ; employment plentiful. Both mines and railways, in particular, remained under Government control and were being run, according to the supposed Socialist ideal, not for the benefit of the capitalist but for the advantage of the community. Nevertheless, the miners opened the year (January 1919) with a demand for a 30 per cent increase on their already excessive wages, a reduction of their recently abbreviated working day to six hours, and the permanent "nationalisation" (more correctly "syndicalisation") of the mines. Scarcely were they persuaded to postpone the enforcement of these preposterous pretensions by the setting up of the injudicial Sankey Commission. The postponement, strongly opposed by the inner circle of the illuminated leaders, was merely temporary ; for behind the economic demands

which lured the rank and file into action lay the real purpose of the revolutionary strike. The Sankey Commission, however, put off the mining crisis for two years.

Meantime the army unrest came to a dangerous head (May 1919), but was allayed by wise concessions. The police agitation culminated in the open mutiny of the disaffected minority in August 1919; it was crushed within a week by judicious firmness.¹ The passing discontent in the navy was eased by prudent reforms and by the enforced migration of the "birds." The *Daily Herald* was bitterly disappointed of its protégés; the Social Revolutionaries had to look elsewhere for agents of their schemes.

The first serious attempt to precipitate the great catastrophe was the Railway Strike of September 26–October 5, 1919. The ostensible demand of the N.U.R. executive was, of course, for an increase of wages—a minimum of £3 a week. It was the only sort of demand respecting which they could count on the general support of their moderate rank and file, or the patient acquiescence of the public. It was, however, a demand sufficiently monstrous to set the revolutionary ball rolling. For if it had been conceded, it would have reduced the railways—already being run at enormous loss—to hopeless insolvency.² This would have entailed, it was hoped, nationalisa-

¹ London and Liverpool were the only two places seriously affected by the Police Mutiny. In London 1075 out of 19,000 came out; in Liverpool 932 out of 2100. The Home Office, quite properly, refused to reinstate the mutineers. By merely losing their employment they escaped very lightly for the breach of their oath, the abandonment of their duty, and their betrayal of the community.

² The deficit on the railways under Government control in 1919 was £45,000,000. The extra cost of the N.U.R. demands this year was estimated at £100,000,000: see important article by "Labour Correspondent" in *The Times*, March 18, 1919.

tion, syndicalisation, expropriation, and the Soviet consummation. Said the Soviet President, Mr. John Maclean: "The railway strike is a class war in its first stage." *The Call*, the organ of the Glasgow Communists, confirmed this view: "The railwaymen's strike," it proclaimed, "is an opening battle in the Social Revolution." That the *Daily Herald* was of the same opinion is indicated by its publication (September 29, 1919) of a full scheme for the constitution of a Soviet Republic under the sensational title, "Be Prepared! People! Make Ready to Rule." When the railwaymen of red Petrograd heard of the outbreak they sent congratulations: "You have adopted the policy of Direct Action," they said, "as one of the best methods of warfare." After the crisis was over, Mr. W. Mellor, of the *Daily Herald*, in his book entitled *Direct Action*, argued that this strike might have been used for "really big ends"; but, he regretfully admits, "the Government won."

Yes, the Government won. They defeated what the Prime Minister rightly described as "an anarchist conspiracy," and that in spite of the fact that they made some grave mistakes in tactics and showed much unjustified timidity. They won because they had public opinion solidly with them. The nation realised that behind the innocent, though unreasonable, demand for higher wages there lay the menace of Red Revolution and the Dictatorship of the Communist Oligarchy.

The battle was not an inexpensive one to either victors or vanquished. The railwaymen's unions, which had squandered their funds with reckless extravagance, were nearly ruined.¹ The cost to the

¹ The expenses of press advertisements alone had been £1500 a day.

State had been some £10,000,000. The losses of the community were estimated at another £40,000,000. About 375,000 men in other avocations had been thrown out of employment. The whole social and industrial organisation of the country had been disarrayed. Two salutary results, however, flowed from this otherwise disastrous struggle. First, it revealed the fact that the community has far greater powers of self-defence than the revolutionaries had anticipated. Secondly, as Mr. Hartley Withers has well said, it "blew to bits the theory that workers would work contentedly and well for the community, and that under a collectivist system friction would be abolished."¹

§ 6. *The Coal War of 1920-1921 and After.*

The Railway Strike of 1919, which Mr. Robert Williams frankly admits was "potentially revolutionary,"² was only the first of the great efforts of the enemies of the Constitution to overthrow Parliamentary Government in Britain and establish the Soviet System. Though discouraged by their defeat—which ought to have been, and might have been, much more decisive than it was, if only the Government had been more resolute—they were not deterred from pursuing their subversive plan of campaign. On the contrary, they were inspired by their escape from the spectacular *débâcle* which on October 5 seemed inevitable, to perfect their schemes for a second and still more formidable blow. They had learned a good deal of the art of social war from the failure of the railway strike. They perceived the

¹ Withers, *The Case for Capitalism*, p. 159.

² *What we Want, and Why*, p. 40.

need of firmer solidarity in the Triple Alliance, of closer co-operation with other Trade Union executives, of a larger supply of money, a better commissariat, a more favourable press.¹ Hence they set to work to tighten the bonds of their own union, to form diplomatic alliances, to draw the Co-operative Societies within their meshes (in order that strikers might be fed while the community at large was being starved into surrender), to get control of the press (so that nothing inimical to the strikers might be able to obtain publication), and so on, with an ingenuity and unscrupulousness reminiscent of the Prussian General Staff. Having done this, they sought diligently, Prussianwise, for a pretext for a defensive-aggressive assault upon Capitalism, the State, and the Nation.

What seemed to some of the less strategic Communists to be a good pretext was the refusal of the British Government to recognise the Bolshevik régime in Russia. But the more prudent were aware that they would not get the sober masses of British working men to follow them on such an issue: the true nature of the Bolshevik despotism had by that time become too clearly evident. They realised that some genuine industrial issue—wages, hours, conditions of labour—had to be discovered. They ultimately found it in the tangled problem of the coal-mining industry.

That the four years' Government control of the mines² had reduced the coal industry to chaos was

¹ Mr. J. Bromley, general secretary of the Locomotive Engineers and Firemen's Union, speaking on January 4, 1920, said that the only reason why he did not at that moment preach a "bloody revolution" was that "unfortunately the people of this country were not ripe for taking the law into their own hands."

² The South Wales mines were taken over December 1916; the remainder March 1917.

admitted, and indeed loudly proclaimed, by both owners and men. In particular the iniquitous post-war regulation that coal should be sold to necessitous foreigners at exorbitant prices in order that the home consumer might get it below cost of production caused immeasurable confusion and demoralisation. Both prices and wages ceased to have any relation to the economics of the industry; the one depended upon the squeezability of the overseas consumer, the other upon the squeezability of the home Government. The home Government, growing restless and alarmed under the constant pressure, insatiable demands, and violent menaces of the Miners' Federation, first, rejected (February 1920) the recommendation of the Sankey Commission that their servitude should be made perpetual by the "nationalisation" of the mines; secondly, took the first step to divest themselves of responsibility (May 1920) by raising the price of coal 14s. 2d. a ton in the home market in order to restore the industry to solvency. The Miners' Executive was determined to secure "nationalisation" as the first step towards syndicalisation and the Soviet Republic. Hence—having wholly failed to obtain popular support for its proposals—it resolved to force the issue indirectly by making new wage and price demands which would reduce the industry to bankruptcy and render it impossible for the Government to cease its subsidies.¹ In accordance with this resolution, in July 1920, it demanded (1) the removal

¹ The attitude of the Miners' Executive could not be better described than in the words of Tacitus (*Historiae*, iv. 19): "Postulabant non ut assequerentur sed causam seditioni. Et Flaccus multa concedendo nihil aliud effecerat quam ut acrius exposcerent quae sciebant negaturum." (They asked not with any idea of obtaining but as a pretext for mutiny. Flaccus by his many concessions had produced no other result but to make them insist with the more violence on what they knew he must decline to give them.)

of the 14s. 2d. recently added to the price of coal, and (2) a wage increase of 2s. per shift. The rejection of this impossible demand led to the great general Coal Strike of October 18-November 4, 1920. Once again the Social Revolution was in sight. "We are going," said Mr. Frank Hodges, "to create a first-class economic crisis which will reduce the nation to chaos." The Railwaymen and Transport Workers decided (October 21) to strike in support of the Miners. The Government, however, replied to the challenge by the drastic and effective *Emergency Powers Act* (October 22-29), and the "potential revolution" collapsed. A second time had the Soviet conspiracy failed. As in the Railway crisis of 1919, so now, both State and Society had vindicated their claim to exist as against the subversive minority. But the cost again had been high. The funds of the Federation had been drained low; the miners had lost £14,000,000 in wages; orders to the value of £26,000,000 had been lost, and the foreign market for British coal permanently damaged; some 350,000 men in other employments had been thrown out of work; the taxpayers had been put to an expense of £8,000,000; the returning prosperity of trade had been shattered; the greatest possible injury had been inflicted upon the community. And all for nothing!

But not even yet was the furious folly of the Revolutionaries abated. "These men," said Mr. Vernon Hartshorn, one of the moderate leaders of the miners, soon after the termination of the strike, "these men are deliberately developing in the coal-field a policy which aims at cutting down output, of organising strike after strike in order to bring about the ruin of the industry, and they are denouncing

everybody who is not prepared to lend himself to the promotion of this insane policy." Their next opportunity for precipitating chaos came with the cessation of Government control on March 31, 1921. The Government, it is true, left the industry, which it had grossly mismanaged, in a deplorable condition.¹ Both owners and miners had deep and genuine grievances. But the Revolutionaries would not have had it otherwise. They aggravated the grievances and exploited them for their own purposes. The miners' extremity was the Bolsheviks' opportunity. Rejecting all settlements of the really vital wages question, they insisted on a "national wage board" and a "national profits pool." Assured, as they supposed, of the full support of the mighty Triple Alliance, they called out their devoted hosts on April Fools' Day. The stoppage was general and complete. To make it the more deadly, even the pump hands and engine-men were withdrawn, so that many mines were doomed to a ruin beyond recovery. The Executives of the Railwaymen and Transport Workers proclaimed a sympathetic strike to begin on Friday, April 15. At last the country was face to face with the supreme issue of Bolshevism *versus* Democracy. From that issue there was fortunately no shrinking on the part of either Government or Community. It was obviously the turning-point of the fate of the nation. Fortunately, at the eleventh hour, the courage of the leaders of the Railwaymen and Transport Workers failed them; they had become aware that they had over-estimated their power, and had realised that they could not count on the obedience of their followers, who had, indeed, no desire whatsoever for Soviet rule. Hence,

¹ The industry was losing at a rate of more than £50,000,000 a year.

less than six hours before the great General Strike was due to begin, they called it off. Such was the fiasco of "Black Friday." Said the disgusted *Daily Herald* next day (April 16, 1921): "It is the heaviest defeat that has befallen the Labour Movement within the memory of man." If instead of "Labour Movement" we read the words "Revolutionary Conspiracy" we may fully concur. It was a "White Friday" for the cause of constitutional democracy. And the victory for orderly Government over violent terrorism was won by the courage of the community and of the common sense of the rank and file of the great trade unions. The so-called Labour leaders—both extremists and moderates—were discredited and disgraced. Misled, abandoned, betrayed, helpless, the unhappy miners struggled against the inevitable until July 4. Then they sullenly surrendered and returned bankrupt to their ruined industry. The cost of this lamentable rebellion was incalculable. The £33,000,000 spent by the State was but a small fraction of the disastrous losses incurred and inflicted. In particular, the problem of unemployment had been rendered almost insoluble.

PART I
DEMOCRACY

"Democracy is the goal to which Providence has guided the evolution of humanity through all the ages."—Bishop WELLDON.

"Let democracy be a mistake ; we can work no other vein till that is exhausted."—Colonel INGERSOLL.

"After giving full weight to all that appeared to me to be well-founded in the argument against democracy, I unhesitatingly decided in its favour."—JOHN STUART MILL.

"A man must be very blind not to see that a revolt against democracy is already in being all over the world."—Dean INGE.

"The spreading reaction against democracy is a serious movement which needs careful watching in all countries."—Mr. LLOYD GEORGE.

"Who believes in democracy nowadays ? Who believes in parliamentary government, in the brotherhood of man, or in universal suffrage ?"—Mr. A. LUDOVICI.

CHAPTER II

THE MEANING OF DEMOCRACY

"Democracy is a bourgeois conception which the revolutionary proletariat must overthrow."—N. LENIN.

"The man who repudiates the Dictatorship of the Proletariat repudiates the Social Revolution and digs the grave of Socialism."—L. TROTSKY.

"I advocate revolution openly. . . . I desire to see the same tactics [as those employed by Lenin and Trotsky] resorted to in Britain."—Mr. TOM MANN.

"Russia has done an inestimable service by teaching the world that Parliaments are nothing but decadent Chinese joss-houses."—Mr. TOM MANN.

"Democracy is in peril five years after the greatest triumph democracy ever had."—Mr. LLOYD GEORGE.

"Direct Action and Political Action cannot be complementary, for they are mutually destructive."—*Industrial Peace*, November 1919.

§ 7. *The Anti-Democratic Theory of Direct Action.*

THE decisive defeat of the Social Revolutionaries in 1921 caused for a time a decline in the popularity of the policy of Direct Action. The menacing Triple Alliance was exploded; the leaders of its constituent unions were fully employed in mutual recriminations, and in writing apologies for "Black Friday"; the responsible officials were engaged in the desperate task of the restoration of their shattered finances;¹

¹ Mr. Frank Lee of the Union of Derbyshire Miners said, towards the end of the strike: "We are stony broke. Even our offices are in pawn. In the October stoppage and in this we have paid out £494,000."

the disillusioned and disgusted rank and file were deserting in thousands. The short cut to the Dictatorship of the Proletariat had, indeed, proved to be merely a rapid descent down a steep place to perdition.

In the circumstances, the theory of Direct Action, which had appeared so persuasive as it was propounded in the pages of the *Daily Herald*, from the platforms of Labour Conferences, or within the arcana of Trade Union Executives, ceased to charm, and a distinct reversion to Political Action took place. But the Labour Party has never repudiated Direct Action. On the contrary, it emphatically asserts that it is merely holding it in reserve, and that it will return to it again whenever it seems likely to succeed.¹ It is spoken of as one of the two feet on which Labour alternately marches to triumph. Hence it appears desirable to examine the principles on which it is defended, and to show their fundamental incompatibility with Democracy. Direct Action and Political Action are not the two feet of one progressive organism; they are motors moving on different planes and in opposite directions.

Just as Russia provides the best example in practice of Direct Action triumphant over Democracy, so does M. Trotsky's *Defence of Terrorism* supply the fullest exposition of the principles of Direct Action, and the most unabashed attempt to justify them. M. Trotsky's case is substantially the same as that which Oliver Cromwell presented in the familiar

¹ A few extremists continue to urge immediate recourse to it. For example, Mr. Tom Mann, in a pamphlet entitled *Power through the General Strike*, dated May 1923, says: "I definitely recommend and strongly advise that all prepare at once for a General Strike. . . . The present is a suitable time for resorting to Direct Action," etc. etc.

words: "What's for their good, not what pleases them—that's the question." He is apparently so firmly convinced that Communism is best for the proletariat, and so passionately sure that none but the proletariat has any right to any good whatsoever, that he is supremely indifferent as to the means by which he establishes his proletarian paradise, and the manner in which he expropriates, or even exterminates, all non-proletarians. He is under no illusions respecting the present unpopularity of his principles; for he recognises that the masses of the Russian peasantry—85 per cent of the population—are not Communists at all, but intense Individualists, the sole interest of each of whom is to acquire and retain private property in his own bit of land and its produce. He is aware that the Bolshevik party, whose leadership he shares with Lenin, consists of less than 500,000 persons out of a total population of more than 150,000,000. No doubt, too, he is familiar with his colleague's remarkable confession that of the faithful half-million only 1 per cent can be regarded as convinced Communists, the residue being made up by 60 per cent of fools and 39 per cent of criminals! Bolshevik rule in Russia, indeed, is an example not merely of the tyranny of a minority, but of the tyranny of a minority of a minority. The great but stupid Russian dog is wagged not by its tail but by the small bunch of rubicund bristles at the end of its tail.

To Trotsky, however, the idea of the tyranny of a minority presents no difficulties. He defends it as necessary and proper. "The real interests of the labouring masses" requires it, he says (p. 44). He and his associates are engaged "not in statically

reflecting a majority, but in dynamically creating it" (p. 43). In order thus to create a majority stern measures are inevitable. "The proletariat will have . . . to kill"; there will be "a determined life and death struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie"; it will be "a merciless civil war" (pp. 25-26). History, he says, shows that there is "no other way of breaking the class will of the enemy except the systematic and energetic use of violence" (p. 52). Again, "Revolution is founded upon intimidation . . . it kills individuals, it intimidates thousands" (p. 55). Thus a "conscious minority" dynamically converts itself into a majority by slaying its main opponents and terrorising the rest.

Such is the theory of Direct Action carried to its logical conclusion. Well may the more moderate Social Revolutionary Abramovich ask, as he contemplates the reign of terror and conscription, "Wherein does your Socialism differ from Egyptian slavery? It was by precisely similar methods that the Pharaohs built the pyramids, forcing the masses to labour." To this pertinent question Trotsky replies that the difference is not in method but in aim. "Our compulsion," he says, "is applied by a Workers' and Peasants' Government in the name of the interests of the labouring masses." To one who does not appreciate this difference "Socialism is a book sealed with seven seals" (p. 159).¹ It is the old argument of the seventeenth-century religious zealot: "Not

¹ The principle of terrorism was derived by the Bolsheviks from Karl Marx, and by Marx from the eighteenth-century Anarchists. Cf. Laski, *Karl Marx: an Essay*, p. 36: "Revolution has neither time nor opportunity for compassion or remorse. Its business is to terrorise its opponents into acquiescence. It must disarm antagonists by execution, imprisonment, forced labour, control of the press. . . . Revolution is war, and war is founded upon terror."

what pleases them, but what's for their good"—or what we *think* is for their good, or what we *profess* to think is for their good !

§ 8. *The Principle of Minority Rule.*

The British advocates of Direct Action are not as a rule so frankly sanguinary as Trotsky. But that is not because they differ from him essentially, but merely because, on the one hand, they are less logical and courageous than he, and because, on the other hand, they cannot afford, as he can, to outrage the sentiments of the milder and less consistent Socialists. Mr. Robert Williams, the principal propagandist of British Bolshevism, merely hints at blood. "The militant proletariat in this, as in every capitalist country," he writes, "will work steadily for, and dedicate and devote themselves unceasingly to, the Social Revolution; peacefully if possible, *but*—the Social Revolution."¹ He freely admits, however, that "an iron discipline will, of course, be necessary during the revolutionary crisis, and later in the transition from Capitalism to Communism";² and "iron discipline" is merely a euphemism for Russian terrorism. Similarly, Mr. William Mellor of the *Daily Herald*, the philosopher of Direct Action, allows that "a revolution cannot be run without iron discipline among the revolutionaries, nor without a total disregard for the ordinary canons of bourgeois morality," and adds that "people who call themselves Socialists and hope to destroy the wage-system without hurting somebody . . . live in a fool's paradise."³

¹ Williams, *The New Labour Outlook*, p. 160.

² *Ibid.* p. 154.

³ Mellor, *Direct Action*, p. 61.

Messrs. Williams and Mellor, in their respective defences of this sanguinary policy of Direct Action, Terrorism, Communistic Revolution, and Minority Rule, rely mainly on four arguments. They contend, first, that Parliament does not adequately represent Labour; secondly, that political methods are not suited to the settlement of industrial questions; thirdly, that Direct Action is more prompt and effective than Political Action; and finally, that minorities are usually right and majorities wrong, and that therefore majorities, for their own good, must be disregarded and coerced. The first three of these arguments need not detain us long: they are obviously flimsy and frivolous. The fourth, however, goes down to the root of democratic principle; it challenges the very conception of constitutional government; it is a clear assertion of the antagonistic principle of oligarchy, and ultimately of despotism.

1. The assertion that Parliament does not adequately represent "Labour"—illustrated by the rejection of the 317 "Labour" candidates in 1918—is based on the oft-exposed but ever-persistent confusion of "Labour" in the sense of the working classes with "Labour" in the sense of the Socialist Party. Since the great extension of the franchise in 1918 (if not before) every Government is necessarily a Labour Government in the true meaning of the term, since it is placed in power by an electorate composed predominantly of working people. The rejection of the 317 Socialist candidates merely meant that genuine British Labour had retained its sanity.

2. The contention that political methods are not suited to the settlement of industrial questions is another instance of that muddled thought and con-

founded terminology on which the Socialist party depends for its subsistence. "Since the struggle between the classes is economic," says Mr. Mellor, "the force that can secure victory must itself employ economic means."¹ Similarly Mr. A. R. Orage: "Economic methods are essential to the achievement of economic emancipation."² In the same strain Mr. Tom Mann urges his Syndicalist hosts to "deal with industrial affairs by industrial agencies."³ As well might one say to one's dairyman, "Since our dispute is about eggs, let us settle it by means of eggs"; or to one's water-rate collector, "Since our conflict relates to water, we must wage it with squirts." In every case there is confusion between the *subject* of controversy and the *method* of argument. There are not as many different methods of argument as there are subjects of controversy. Subjects of controversy are infinite in number—political, economic, religious, social, domestic, and so on; of methods of argument there are only two. One is the method of persuasion; the other is the method of force. There is no third; and the expressions "economic methods" and "industrial agencies" are merely euphemisms for force—violence, coercion, sabotage, and war.

3. The statement that Direct Action is more prompt and effective than Political Action is not so often heard to-day as it was before the three great reverses of 1919–1921. In spite, however, of all defeats and disasters, belief in Direct Action is still a cardinal article of faith to Syndicalists, Guild Socialists,

¹ Mellor, *Direct Action*, p. 32. Cf. Williams, *New Labour Outlook*, pp. 108, 121.

² Orage, *National Guilds*, p. 64.

³ *What we Want and Why*, p. 120.

and Anarchists. It resembles the trust which before 1914 the Prussian militarists placed in "mailed fists" and "shining armour." Violence, whether diplomatic or industrial, can in a peaceful world frequently achieve a few preliminary successes. The triumphs of Prussian terrorism in 1905 and 1908 were paralleled in Britain by the results achieved through the great Rail and Coal strikes of 1911 and 1912. But in both cases the triumphs were rather apparent than real. They were short-lived and evanescent, not permanent and substantial. They alienated the community; they alarmed the world. At the very moment when the Great General Staff on the one side, and the "Council of Action" on the other side imagined that they had discovered a short cut to universal dominion, outraged Democracy was preparing the defences which were to prove their destruction.

§ 9. *Are Majorities usually Wrong?*

The three arguments for Direct Action just enumerated are patently feeble and perverse. Not so the fourth: it deserves careful consideration. It is to the effect that minorities are usually right and majorities wrong. Mr. Robert Williams clearly states the case in the Preface to his *New Labour Outlook*. "What is called human progress," he says, "consists of the partial or complete success of an active and intelligent minority forcing their views and convictions on an undiscerning and indiscriminating majority. 'Twas ever so. It will remain so." Probably both M. Lenin and Signor Mussolini would concur. Mr. Levine, the historian of Syndicalism,

expresses the same opinion from another point of view when he remarks: "The effect of political majorities when they do make themselves felt is to hinder advance and to suppress the progressive active and more developed minorities."¹ Pursuing a similar train of thought, Mr. G. D. H. Cole, the Guild Socialist, following the French Syndicalist Pouget, contends that "there is for the conscious minority an obligation to act without paying any attention to the refractory mass."² These depressing and anti-democratic sentiments apparently find respectable support in the utterances of such sober observers of human affairs as Professor Blackie, Mr. Frederic Harrison, and Dean Inge. Says Professor Blackie: "The majority in the most perilous and critical matters, as I read history, is pretty sure to be wrong."³ Mr. Frederic Harrison's reasoned conviction is that "almost all great things are done in communities by minorities, not by majorities."⁴ The Dean of St. Paul's follows Sir Henry Maine in expressing the belief that "universal suffrage would have prohibited the spinning-jenny and the power-loom, the threshing-machine, and the Gregorian calendar"; that it would have vetoed the Reformation and restored the Stuarts.⁵

Now it is perfectly true that all great seminal ideas — *σπερματικοὶ λόγοι* — are generated and developed in the midst of minorities. Nay, more, it is possible, and indeed necessary, to assert that originally they have their rise in some single and solitary human soul — a minority of one. That is admitted. What is at

¹ Levine, L., *The Labour Movement in France*, p. 133.

² Cole, *The World of Labour*, p. 74.

³ Blackie, J. S., quoted J. Platt, *Democracy*, p. 52.

⁴ Harrison, *Order and Progress*, p. 100.

⁵ Inge, *Outspoken Essays*, I. p. 9.

issue is the *method* which this illuminated individual and his handful of early disciples should adopt in order to disseminate their ideas and cause them to prevail. Mr. Robert Williams says that they should *force* them on "an undiscerning and indiscriminating majority." This was the method which the Devil recommended to Christ in his third temptation. It is a seductive method: it promises speedy results and accelerated triumphs. It recognises the fact that the immense masses of men are intensely conservative in all that concerns their daily habits of thought and common ways of life; that they tend to reject merely through irrational prejudice many innovations which would do them much good; that they are more easily coercible than convincible. But it ignores some other facts not less important. Among them are these. (1) Not all new ideas are true ideas. On the contrary, many of them are absurd and pernicious. Perhaps only one in a million is in the straight line of human progress. If every crank with his crazy confederates is inspired with the conviction that it is proper to him to *force* his peculiar lunacy upon what he regards as the "undiscerning and indiscriminating majority," there is an end of the age of reason and a return to the primitive confusion of the jungle. What is sauce for the Bolsheviks is sauce for the Fascisti. What is right to Mr. Williams is also right to Kemal Pasha. (2) The prejudices of the masses are not always so irrational as they seem. Though sometimes it is hard to explain or defend them, they are not infrequently based on an experience which embodies the treasures of an immemorial antiquity, and a tradition rich in ancestral wisdom. Prejudices in favour of personal freedom, private property, indissoluble marriage, sober

patriotism, and religious faith are not improbably far sounder and saner than many of the utopian novelties of the emancipated intellectuals of the passing day. (3) The only secure and permanent progress is that which is attained by the slow method of persuasion and not by the rapid method of compulsion. Mr. Williams is wrong when he says that "revolution is simply accelerated evolution."¹ As well might he say that blowing up a house is simply accelerated building; or that boiling an egg is merely a rapid method of hatching a chicken; or that pulling up a plant by the roots is only a vigorous means of hastening its growth. No: revolution and evolution are irreconcilable contradictories and incompatible opposites. And evolution is the only one of the two which gives enduring results. In the long run it is public opinion that prevails, and the might of the comparatively immobile multitude that decides the issue. The method of persuasion, not the method of force, is in the end triumphant. Revolution does not accelerate evolution; it merely generates reaction. However long it may take to convert and educate the masses, only by means of their conversion and education can any cause be made finally to succeed. Moreover, such is the value of each individual soul that the method of persuasion is the only one which is consistent with the moral dignity of man.

§ 10. *The Principle of Majority Rule.*

The meaning of democracy is the rule of the majority. No one discerned this truth more clearly or expressed it more emphatically than Richard

¹ Williams, *New Labour Outlook*, p. 59.

Cobden. He was throughout his life a pioneer of novelties and a leader in unpopular causes. He was not always (Heaven be thanked!) successful in his propaganda. But he did always recognise that he could succeed properly and permanently only by converting the communal conscience, by convincing the public intelligence, and by controlling the general will. In respect of one of his pet schemes he said: "I am content to be on this question, as I have been on others, in a minority, and in a minority to remain until I get a majority."¹ He plainly perceived the fundamental truth that the one constitutional right of a minority is to convert itself into a majority. He had a proper respect for his opponents; admitted their right to their opinions, and set himself bravely to the long and toilsome but necessary task of winning them over to his side. He had none of that impatience and contempt which marks the young revolutionary of the present day. Compare his sentiments with those, for instance, of Mr. G. D. H. Cole, who says: "In this country at least it is useless to invoke public opinion because it is selfish, unenlightened, and vindictive . . . the great British Public is marked by narrowness, egoism, and intellectual indolence."² It is a matter open to question whether it is the great British Public or Mr. Cole himself who is vindictive, egoistic, and mistaken. It is conceivable that the great British Public is right in its quiet but emphatic rejection of the Guild nostrum which Mr. Cole insistently forces upon its attention. But, be that as it may, there is no sort of doubt that Mr. Cole's sentiments are

¹ Morley, *Life of Cobden*, vol. i. p. 503.

² Cole, *The World of Labour*, p. 34.

entirely subversive of self-government. They breathe the spirit of the slave-driver, the persecutor, the tyrant.

The democratic principle of majority rule, which Cobden accepted, and Cole rejects, is the only one that is tolerable amid an old, mature, politically-minded and sturdily-independent population such as that of Britain. No doubt there are peoples for whom democracy is not suited; and no doubt there was a stage in the history of the British nations when even they were not ready for self-determination. In days of lawlessness, before barbaric man has accustomed himself to community, ere yet he has learned to restrain his anarchic passions; and again in days of insecurity when even peace-loving, law-abiding, and industrious societies are menaced by external foes—strong, autocratic, militant monarchies are necessary. Only by means of the unique will, the instantaneous decision, and the prompt action of the despotic ruler can primitive individualism be suppressed, or predatory incursions be repelled. When habits of obedience have been implanted, and when constant vigilance against alien enemies is no longer needful, the day of the despot is past. But even then the adolescent community is not necessarily ready for democracy. It may be, and commonly is, too ignorant, too little experienced, too seriously lacking in character and control to render self-government possible. Inevitably the great concerns of its politics have to be left in the hands of an aristocracy—a small select ruling class of nobles or of priests, whose prime function (however little they may realise it) is educative. When the moral and intellectual training of the people is sufficiently advanced, then comes the

time when aristocracy may and should give place to democracy.

Now in British history that stage was reached towards the end of the Tudor period. The habit of obedience to law had been implanted by a succession of vigorous mediaeval monarchs; security against external molestation had been attained by the building of a fleet and by the defeat of the Spanish Armada; the work of schools and universities had produced an educated laity; the long ennobling labours of the Church had given a general sense of responsibility and devotion to the common weal. The day of tutelage was past. It was not easy for kings to see that despotism was no longer either necessary or tolerable. Still less easy was it for nobles and clergy to realise that the pupil-nation had come of age. But in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the required information was conveyed to them, and at the beginning of the nineteenth the people found itself master of its own fate. The history of the subsequent period has been the inspiring and fascinating record of the way in which by means of Emancipation Acts, Reform Acts, Redistribution Acts, Ballot Acts, Corrupt Practices Acts, Parliament Acts, and hosts of other measures, the sovereign democracy has taken control and has organised itself for its great task. And it is wholly inconceivable that at this stage of its career it should surrender its newly acquired powers into the hands of acquisitive minorities, or should deliver its destiny into the keeping of any oligarchy of Communists and cranks. It is, moreover, monstrous that such crazy coteries should seek to dethrone Democracy and substitute for it the Dictatorship of the Demented.

§ 11. *The Four Postulates of Democracy.*

The *Representation of the People Act* of 1918 almost completed the structure of political democracy in Britain. It conferred the franchise on some 20,000,000 of the community. The only considerable addition that remains to be made is the equalisation of the electoral qualifications of men and women; and that addition cannot be long delayed. But though the structure of political democracy in Britain is fairly complete, although the machinery of democratic government is effectively installed, and although the method of democratic administration is in general familiar, it cannot be said that as yet the actual working of democracy in the country is wholly satisfactory. That this is the case is not surprising. The people is still new to its task; it is only slowly and painfully acquiring the essential information respecting the problems which it has to face, and its education is being sadly retarded by a multitude of erroneous teachers and false prophets; it is called upon to take control at a time when the world is in a state of exceptional distraction, and when the problems of politics are complex beyond all precedent. Nevertheless, the people has got hold; public opinion is in the main both intelligent and sound; the false prophets and erroneous teachers are diminishing in influence; the prospect is full of hope. In order that this hope may be realised, that is, in order that an efficient and smooth-working democratic constitution may be brought into being, four prerequisites must be secured. They are as follows:

1. *A high Standard both of Honesty and of Honour.*

—Unless a people is morally sound, any and every

species of democratic state must necessarily become a ghastly failure. The corruption of the best is the worst; and as a noble democracy is the ideal form of polity, so a corrupt democracy is the vilest and most hopeless. Now acquisitiveness is perhaps the master passion of the human mind. Within due limits, and under proper restraint, it is a worthy and indeed necessary passion; any one who is entirely devoid of it is not a man but merely a misshaped vegetable. Acquisitiveness is essentially a just and even divine desire for self-realisation and enlargement of personality. But it easily gets out of bounds and beyond control, and then it is devastating in its destructiveness. The possession of political power presents to those who hold it an immense temptation to use that power for their own material profit—to secure 9d. for 4d.; to evade income-tax; to obtain places, pensions, and doles; to enjoy public services—such as education, amusement, medical advice, legal assistance—without paying for them. Unless this tendency is strongly held in check by a spirit of proud integrity, a determination to be self-sufficient, and a delicate sense of honour, democracy is but a short-cut to the bottomless pit. The abysmal degradation of politics in France, in Latin America, and in some of the States of the Northern Union witness to the reality of the peril.

2. *A high Level of Intelligence and a sound System of Education.*—It is a subject often debated whether knaves or fools are the greater peril to a commonwealth. Mr. Delisle Burns thinks that fools have pre-eminence. "One might reasonably prefer," he says, "to be guided by intelligent villains each seeking his own interest, rather than by well-intentioned fools who

continually care for the interest of others.”¹ Probably Socrates would have argued that the alternatives are unreal ; that no villain can be truly intelligent ; that knowledge and virtue are one and the same thing. Nevertheless he would have agreed with Mr. Burns as to the deadly danger of intellectual incompetence in the sphere of politics. Intellectual incompetence is not quite the same thing as ignorance ; it is rather lack of common sense. Many of the so-called *intelligenza* or “intellectuals” possess a good deal of information and some ideas ; what they lack is the saving grace of normal reasonableness. The problems of modern politics are so numerous, so complex, so important, that a sovereign people which has to deal with them must, if disaster is to be avoided, have marked capacity of mind, sound balance of judgement, and, in addition, the training and the substantial knowledge which a good system of education can alone supply.

3. *A clear Consciousness of Community.*—Personal qualities of mind and character, however lofty, are not by themselves sufficient to provide a sound basis for democracy. There must further be a strong sense of solidarity, an intense conviction of unity, a pervasive feeling of communal life. All racial feuds, all religious schisms, all class conflicts, all social cleavages weaken democracy, and if carried to extremes destroy its possibility altogether. True democracy is inconceivable at the present moment in the Balkans, Russia, India, Egypt, or Southern Ireland.

4. *The Existence of an explicit Public Opinion, a sensitive Social Conscience, and an effective General Will.*—This is a large theme, to the consideration

¹ Burns, *Political Ideals*, p. 290.

of which we will devote the closing section of this chapter.

§ 12. *Public Opinion, Communal Conscience,
General Will.*

Democracy presupposes the existence of a society organically one, a society harmonious within itself. If it is torn by feuds or rent by schisms, beyond mere growing-pains, its health declines. If these feuds and schisms develop into social revolution or class war it perishes utterly, and some form of authoritarian organisation inevitably takes its place. When, however, this essential harmony and unity exist, then a true and vigorous body politic comes into being, capable of developing a public opinion, a communal conscience, and a general will, which are the highest characteristics of corporate personality, and the necessary conditions of successful democratic statehood. Such a society, says Mr. J. A. Hobson in a fine passage, "is rightly regarded as a moral and rational organism in the sense that it has a common psychic life, character, and purpose, which are not to be resolved into the life, character, and purpose of its individual members."¹ Within such a society—where fellowship is cordial, where goodwill prevails, where intelligent interest in affairs is general, where all seek the common good, and where each regards himself as a member of the whole—the ultimate sovereignty resides in public opinion.

"The political function of the people," says Mr. Frederic Harrison, "consists for the most part in the formation of a living public opinion on the social

¹ Hobson, *The Crisis*, p. 73.

and national questions of the day.”¹ This public opinion is formed in countless subtle ways—by means of reading, conversation, debate, meditation. Its formation implies freedom both of thought and of speech—an uncensored press, an unrestricted platform, an unfettered pulpit, a representative parliament. It is probably slow in forming itself, for it is the final residuum and ultimate product of the interaction of countless individual and sectional opinions: it is none the worse for that. It is probably conservative, for, as we have already remarked, the masses of men are averse from rapid change: it is all the better for that. It is probably ill-informed in matters of detail, for the problems of modern politics are far too complex for the man in the street to master: that is immaterial. For the function of the sovereign democracy is, not to govern, but to appoint a Government. “All that Democracy ever meant,” said Thomas Carlyle, “lies there—the attainment of a truer and truer Aristocracy, or Government of the Best.”² The two great tasks of the modern electorate are indeed, first, the determination of general lines of policy; secondly, the selection of the best men to pursue them and to embody in precise enactments their vital principles.

This sovereign public opinion is more than a mere intellectual decision upon the issues placed before it. It is to a still greater extent a moral judgement upon them. The communal conscience ought to be, and happily often is, quicker and more emphatic in coming to a conclusion than is the communal intelligence.

¹ Harrison, *Order and Progress*, p. 241.

² Carlyle, *Latter-Day Pamphlets*, No. 3. Cf. Mazzini's saying quoted by N. M. Butler, *True and False Democracy*, p. 6: “Democracy means the progress of all, through all, under the leadership of the best and wisest.”

The issue of right and wrong is not only more important, but usually far simpler than the issue of wise or unwise. One of the most hopeful features of our British democracy is that on the supreme moral questions its verdicts are so prompt and in the main so righteous. Whether in the small world of the theatre, or in the arena of such vast world-events as the German invasion of Belgium in 1914, even if the head of the British public may be a bit confused at times, from the first and all along its heart is sound.

Public opinion and communal conscience find their outlet into action by means of the general will. It is one of the great problems of psychology and biology how volition translates itself into corporeal movement. Similarly, it is one of the prime questions for the political philosopher to consider how the general will of the sovereign people forms itself, displays itself, expresses itself, and transmutes itself into operative deed. This is the problem of the Method of Democracy.

CHAPTER III

THE METHOD OF DEMOCRACY

"The British method of government is essentially a method of government by discussion, than which there is no better."—DR. ERNEST BARKER.

"The conception of modern democracy is based on equality and on majority rule."—EDWARD ELLIOTT.

"Government by a minority is either anarchy or despotism."—ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

"The history of modern times from the point of view of political science is the history of the growth of democracy."—MISS M. P. FOLLETT.

"Democracy means the progress of all, through all, under the leadership of the best and wisest."—MAZZINI.

"If Labour cannot win a majority at the polls, all Labour can do is to set to work to persuade people to vote 'right' at the next election. Any other way is not democracy. If the Labour Party should ever have any other way in view, it had much better give up using the word 'democracy' altogether."—*Spectator*, July 8, 1922.

§ 13. *Importance of Agreement as to Method.*

WE have already remarked that there are two, and only two, possible methods by which political or any other questions can be solved, viz. (1) the method of authority and force, and (2) the method of discussion and consent. Hence all talk of settling economic questions by economic methods, religious questions by religious methods, social questions by social methods, academic questions by academic methods, aquatic questions by aquatic methods, Billingsgate

questions by Billingsgate methods, and so on, is nonsense. General strikes, excommunications, ostracisms, swishings, duckings, and bullyings are all merely modes of authoritarian and irrational violence. They are intended to subdue and not convert the will. Now the British Democracy, with its splendid ancestry of Saxon self-government, Mediaeval autonomy, Puritan independence, and Modern emancipation, will not be bullied and coerced. So long as Labour plays with Direct Action and meditates militancy, so long will it remain "on the threshold," and will never cross it into effective power. And so long as so-called Labour leaders—such as Messrs. MacDonald, Snowden, and Clynes—are driven by their unruly followers into Soviets, Councils of Action, and General Staffs, so long do they demonstrate the unfitness of Labour in general, and themselves in particular, to rule. For, whether or not it is generally true; in this country, at any rate, it is a fact that "will and not force is the basis of the State."¹ In Britain, if nowhere else, "Government is at bottom the co-ordination of a multitude of wills into unison, and not their suppression."² The people in whose midst the constitutional or parliamentary method of government has been developed and perfected will steadily refuse to see it destroyed, or supplanted by any minority method of coercion.

For the constitutional or parliamentary method of procedure, as developed and perfected in Britain, is, when it is honestly and intelligently applied, the most admirable instrument which so far has been devised by man for determining public opinion and giving

¹ Cf. Green, T. H., *Principles of Pol. Obligation*, pp. 121-41.

² Harrison, F., *Order and Progress*, p. 58.

expression to the general will. It has, of course, like all human inventions, its defects. In particular, where public opinion is degraded or ill-informed, and when the general will is infirm or corrupt, it cannot give good results. But that is a defect rather of the material than of the machine. Democracy, indeed, implies a deliberate preference for self-government over good government. Its great purpose, as Mr. Bernard Shaw once caustically remarked, is "to prevent your being governed better than you want to be governed." He might have added "or worse," but that would have destroyed the pungency of his jibe. The motto of Democracy, in short, is "The best government possible in the circumstances ; but in any case self-government."

Hence whatever policies of progress and perfection enlightened or illuminated minorities may propound in Britain, it will be necessary for them to seek their triumph by those slow processes of the constitutional or parliamentary method, and not by the quick short route of revolutionary violence. The sooner this is recognised on all sides the better. For while radical conflicts are being waged as to method, the substantive problems of politics are being neglected. Mr. Frederic Harrison used to lament the prodigious expenditure of time and energy which had been involved in the nineteenth-century struggles over Reform Bills, Ballot Acts, and the like—mere matters of the machinery of government. Whilst they were going on, and until they were settled, the vital "condition of the people" question could not be seriously dealt with. Much more deadly and obstructive is the debate between Direct Action and Democracy. It destroys the possibility of the settlement of any

question whatsoever. For the knowledge that Labour intends to force its policy (*e.g.* respecting the nationalisation of mines) upon the country by the method of violence, if the method of persuasion fails, destroys rational discussion, and raises up against the policy of Labour an equally unreasoning and militant opposition. How many of our present-day problems would long ago have been solved if goodwill and common sense had been allowed to prevail, and if the maddening menace of violence had been removed! The first essential to the settlement of our numerous and aggravated difficulties—whether at home or abroad—is agreement as to method. The Labour Party which is persistently pacifist abroad must cease to be persistently militant at home. It must recover consistency, and must apply to domestic affairs the principles which it preaches in respect of foreign policy. It must renounce Class War as it has denounced War between States. For the evil spirit of both is one and the same. There can be no peace on earth and no hope of prosperity or progress until the method of discussion and consent supersedes in every sphere the method of compulsion and violence.

§ 14. *The Democratic Method: (1) Proposal and Propaganda.*

The function of the pioneer in ideas and of the enlightened minority whom he gathers round him is, not to make a violent onslaught upon an amazed and bewildered democracy, but to rouse it by an appeal to its mind and heart. Its function is educative, not coercive. On the one hand, the dignity of each free citizen demands that he should be persuaded, not

persecuted or suppressed, and that he should be allowed to remain unpersuaded if his judgement or his prejudices repel the arguments of the innovators. On the other hand, the ultimate success of the new idea itself is hastened rather than retarded by the refusal of its advocates to resort to compulsion. This is the truth which Direct Actionists, persecutors, inquisitors, and other zealots are so slow to perceive. The Reformation, for instance, as conceived by Erasmus and as rejected by the consensus of Christendom in the early sixteenth century, seemed too tardy and uncertain a process to satisfy the demands of the more enthusiastic Protestants. Hence they transferred their allegiance from the quiet scholar to that lusty fighter, Martin Luther, who, gathering his army of German princes, knights, and burgesses about him, stormed the high places of Rome and established in Germany by violence a Protestant sect. The result was, not a reform of Christendom, but a hopeless schism in the Church; devastating conflicts which desolated Europe for a century and almost exterminated the Nordic stock; a consecration of militarism and barbarism which attained its most awful manifestation in the German atrocities of the Great War; and a German National Cult, narrow, stagnant, unspiritual, impotent. Only now, after four hundred years of disaster, is the baleful star of Luther in the descendant, and the mild pervasive radiance of Erasmus reaching its meridian.

No doubt many of our minorities of Socialists, Syndicalists, and Anarchists—with all their innumerable sections, sub-sections, and eccentrics—are not only as pugnacious, but also as honest, as zealous, and as devoted as was Luther. They are enthusiastic-

ally eager to make their cause prevail. There are, however, two things which they should bear in mind. The first is—what has already been emphasised—that a majority has a right to its opinions and prejudices as well as a minority; that a majority may conceivably have truth and justice on its side; and that a majority may even be “conscious and active” and capable of defending itself. The second thing which should be remembered is that “conscious and active” minorities tend to have within themselves still more conscious and more active sub-minorities of still more violent extremists, who may employ against the “conscious and active” minority precisely those weapons of direct action and terrorism which that minority has employed and justified in its attack on the majority.

Large fleas have little fleas
Upon their backs to bite 'em;
Little fleas have lesser fleas,
And so *ad infinitum*.

Just as the *Daily Herald* accuses the Labour Party of pandering to the bourgeoisie and compromising with the capitalist, so does the *Workers' Dreadnought* denounce the *Daily Herald* for the mildness of its language, the squeamishness of its morals, and the pinkiness of its red. The trouble about minorities is that there are so many of them. A majority may be full of defects, but at any rate there is only one of it. Lenin has been much harassed in Russia by subconscious minorities outside his party, and by conscious sub-minorities within it. He has made short work with them all. He has dubbed them indiscriminately “reactionaries,” put them up against a wall and shot them. Self-defence required that he should do so; but in doing so he has forfeited any

claim which he himself may ever have had for mercy or consideration. According to the standards of either majority or minority rule he is condemned. He stands forth as a mere tyrant, determined at all costs to maintain his own ascendancy.

The constitutional function of a minority, then, is that of proposal and propaganda. It is its constitutional right; it is its communal duty. Corresponding to this high and important function, which is the very soul of progress in society, is the obligation on the part of the community, on the one hand, to grant perfect freedom of prophecy, and, on the other hand, not to turn a deaf ear to the prophets however unpleasant may be their message.

§ 15. *The Democratic Method* : (2) *Discussion*.

The purpose of the propaganda of a constitutional minority is to win so many adherents as to convert itself into the constitutional majority. The means by which it endeavours to do so is discussion. It organises itself into an association; it appoints an executive; it formulates a programme; it holds public meetings; it secures exposition in the press. If its proposals attract attention, they probably lead to criticism and opposition. That is a hopeful sign; it means that they are taking hold. Criticism and opposition naturally result in debate—attack on the one side and defence on the other—and, although debate is not discussion in the true sense of the word, nevertheless in a healthy society, where fellowship and goodwill prevails, debate tends to issue in discussion. Whether it does so or not depends upon whether or not both sides are prepared to learn from their

opponents, to listen to argument, to modify the opinions which they profess. If either side is rigid, unyielding, uncompromising, unsympathetic, the debate terminates, not in fruitful discussion, but in acrimonious futility.

Debate is a conflict for victory between opponents ; discussion is a search for a *modus operandi* among friends. Debate is useful for bringing into sharp relief the antagonistic principles at stake ; discussion is necessary for the harmonisation of these principles, if this be possible, into an agreed working polity. The art of debate is much more highly developed among mankind than the art of discussion. It is an individualistic art, accordant with the fighting instincts of the human animal, gratifying to his love of leadership and popular applause. Discussion implies a strong sense of community, a subordination of self to society, a belief in the intelligence and honesty of dissenters, an ardent desire to remove differences, surmount difficulties, and arrive at a common policy on which all can agree. It aims at, and if successful achieves, the creation of a collective opinion and a general will which are different from the opinion and will of any individual member of the deliberating group, but to which each individual member has made his contribution.

"Democracy," says Miss M. P. Follett in her remarkable book, *The New State*, "is the bringing forth of a genuine collective will, one to which every single being must contribute the whole of his complex life, one of which every single being must express the whole at one point" (p. 7), and she proceeds to show the manner in which, during the course of discussion, the collective will is evolved. It is evolved not by

concession, or even compromise, but by composition, that is to say by a genuine integration of differences. The existence of differences is essential: uniformity and docility mean stagnation. "The core of the social process is not likeness, but the harmonisation of differences through interpenetration" (p. 34), and "differences must be integrated, not annihilated or absorbed" (p. 39). Hence, concludes Miss Follett, "we must learn to think of discussion not as a struggle but as an experiment in co-operation. We must learn co-operative thinking, intellectual team-work" (p. 97).

It is obvious that this ideal of creative discussion—this conception of the formation of a public opinion by the process of co-operative consideration—is wholly incompatible with the principle of Class War, or indeed of any militancy whatsoever. It assumes goodwill, mutual confidence, and a high unselfishness. It is utterly alien from the barbaric idea of "an active and intelligent minority forcing their views and convictions on an undiscerning and indiscriminating majority." And, further, it may be noted, it is inconsistent with the "delegate theory" of representation. For if representatives are mere delegates, pledged to vote in accordance with the precise and detailed instructions of their constituents, discussion is impossible. Nay, even debate is difficult. For even in debate an appearance of discussion has, for dramatic purposes, to be maintained. At least the histrionic possibility that rational argument may influence opinion and turn a vote has to be contemplated. By a congress of preordained delegates no collective opinion or integrated will can conceivably be created. As well might one hope for corporate life to spring up amid a congeries of gramophones.

§ 16. *The Democratic Method* : (3) *The Vote*.

Excellent examples of the way in which debate, developing into discussion, has issued into a harmonised and operative public opinion and general will are provided richly in the recent history of even our imperfect British democracy. The social reforms initiated by the Clapham sect ; the economic changes inaugurated by the Physiocrats ; the improvements in the legal code first advocated by the Utilitarians ; the political transformation started by the Philosophical Radicals—these and countless other beneficent movements supply instances of the manner in which a convinced and enlightened minority has by the slow but sure method of constitutional advance converted itself into a majority. Howard, Bentham, Adam Smith, Wilberforce, Romilly, Shaftesbury, all commenced their reforming careers as leaders of a handful of idealists : all achieved triumphant success not by compulsion but by conversion ; not by smashing the heads of their opponents but by winning their hearts. Those who say that constitutional methods have done nothing for the nation at large, or for the working class in particular, are guilty of gross ignorance or grave perversion of fact. Practically everything of enduring value has been effected by constitutional means. “The Factory Acts, the Education Acts, the Workmen’s Compensation Acts, the Old Age Pension Acts, the National Insurance Acts, the Public Health Acts, and the Housing Acts were measures secured solely by political means.”¹ Moreover, in estimating the value of the democratic method, we have to take into account not only what

¹ Stone, G., *History of Labour*, p. 251.

it has done, but also what it has prevented. It has saved the country alike from stagnant reaction and violent revolution, and has kept it fairly in the secure middle course of sane progress.

The instrument of this wise guidance and cautious advance has been the vote. What is the vote? Says Professor John Dewey, one of the finest modern exponents of the democratic idea: "A vote is not an impersonal counting of one; it is a manifestation of some tendency of the social organism through a member of that organism."¹ Miss Follett's thoughts run along the same lines: "To make my vote," she writes, "a genuine part of the expression of the collective will is the first purpose of politics."² The vote has been too much regarded from the individualistic point of view as a personal right; it has been claimed as something which a citizen can justly demand, on his own account and in his own interest, in virtue of his mere humanity.³ This aspect, of course, should not be totally ignored. Human personality is the one thing in the world of final and absolute value, and even community is merely a means to the end of individual perfection. And individual perfection can hardly be attained by any one who does not fully share the large life of the community. But individual perfection will not be attained in an *evil* community, and an evil community will certainly come into existence if the franchise is exercised by people either morally or intellectually incapable of realising and recognising

¹ Dewey, *Ethics of Democracy*, p. 9.

² Follett, M. P., *The New State*, p. 179.

³ On this matter Mr. G. Lowes Dickinson is constrained to rebuke the excessive individualism of the Fabian Society, which urges in Tract No. 11 the claims of paupers to the franchise: see Dickinson, *Development of Parliament*, p. 152.

its responsibilities. Hence, as Treitschke says, in words with which a democrat can for once agree, "the right to vote is not an individual right, but rather a civic obligation to be exercised for the good of the community and the welfare of the State."¹

The vote which the enfranchised citizen casts should represent, not primarily what he thinks best for himself, or his group, or his sect, or his class, but what he thinks best for the community as a whole. And it should represent, not primarily his isolated opinion (if such a thing is conceivable), but rather his opinion moulded and formed by contact with the minds of all sorts and conditions of his fellows. Each and every vote, ideally, embodies the public opinion, the social conscience, and the general will, of the whole community, focussed through the medium of the individual mind. As Professor John MacCunn finely says: "The vote is simply one more opportunity, one more instrument whereby the potential moral worth of the man becomes the realised and practical worth of the enfranchised citizen."²

§ 17. *The Democratic Method* : (4) *Decision of Majority.*

As we contemplate the nature of the vote in its communal aspect, we realise that our conception of "the majority" loses its merely numerical significance. "The majority" ceases to present those purely arithmetical features which are depicted so prominently in the distorted visions of such imperfect and unimaginative Socialists as Mr. H. G. Wells and

¹ Davis, H. W. C., *The Political Thought of Treitschke*, p. 143.

² MacCunn, J., *Ethics of Citizenship*, p. 9.

Mr. G. D. H. Cole. These writers, who, in respect of Democracy, cannot shake off their individualistic obsessions, see in "the majority" nothing more than a vast inanimate collection of isolated units, unrelated to one another, and merely antagonistic to the "conscious and active minority" illuminated by themselves. This is a false and essentially anti-social conception. In a democratic community "the majority" is not a congeries of self-determined and insulated personalities; it is a body which for the moment organically represents the prevailing tendency of public opinion and the dominant resolution of the general will. Consider how it is formed, and the manner in which it comes into existence.

It is not a fixed and permanent body like the population of a state: it is subject to no census. It has not even the calculability or durability of a voluntary association. Nay, further, it is less tangible and more evanescent than political party, round which it nebulously tends to gather. It is merely the passing congregation of those who at a given moment are in general agreement on a specific issue, and in support of certain men. Round its outer edge is a vast circle of the doubtful and the hesitant who, if the issue were changed, or new men substituted, might fly off at a tangent and leave it a minority. For in its neighbourhood is the complementary congregation of precisely the same kind, the minority (possibly divided into several groups centring round separate nuclei). The attraction of the two bodies, the one to the other, is powerful and all-pervasive; their interaction is incessant. It is the work of the minority, by presenting the issue in new forms and by discrediting the leaders of the majority, to draw off

the dubious outer circle of voters and gather them into its own circumference. The majority, in order to remain a majority, is compelled — through the agency of its leaders and their party organisation—to be constantly on the alert, to defend its presentation of affairs, to modify policy found to be unpopular, to discard discredited instruments, to frame new measures, and to choose new men.

Thus in a healthy democratic community, such as we are now contemplating, there is a constant interplay between majority and minority. The minority, in proportion to its numbers, is as fully represented in the decision ultimately reached as is the majority. By means of debate, discussion, concession, compromise, and co-ordination, the public opinion of the community has been clarified, its conflicting convictions have been harmonised, and it has attained to that unity of general will which is essential for effective action.

Of course, in the hurly-burly of actual present-day politics we have not yet reached either that perfection of procedure or that precision of result here depicted. That this is the case is due to no small extent to the excessive individualism of the extreme Socialists, and to the anti-social spirit of such irreconcilable groups as the Syndicalists and Anarchists, to say nothing of sectarians and cranks. They are all take and no give. They are devoid of the sense of community. They lack all consideration for the opinions, the consciences, the wills of their opponents. They are alien from the spirit of the Great Society. They are merely incarnated objection. Their presence and their violent activity makes the working of democracy difficult, and immeasurably lowers its efficiency.

There they are, however, and we have to make the best of them. They are not wholly without their uses. They do render some contribution, however, unwillingly and unconsciously, to the ultimate opinion and decision of the majority. Moreover, though they hold themselves aloof from the body politic, they serve, by attacking it from the outside, to stimulate its activity and awake its energy. They are the gad-flies of the democracy.

Over against them, and to some extent a providential set-off against them, are the small intractable and unassimilable groups of Die-Hards. They may be termed incarnated Reaction. They, too, are alien from the Commonwealth, impervious to its living and progressive spirit, unable to realise or share its demand that change of structure shall keep pace with change of environment. But Reactionaries are less dangerous to the State than Revolutionaries. They are old and feeble and comparatively few. And though they may die hard, nevertheless they *are* dying and eventually they *do* die. Moreover, they also have their uses. They serve as steadiers and drags. They are the bogie-men of the democracy.

§ 18. *The Democratic Method*: (5) *Obedience of All*.

Professor Graham Wallas in his latest book, *Our Social Heritage*, says, wisely and impressively: "At this moment of the world's history anything which increases the prestige of the idea of majority rule against the disruptive forces of racial or class or military minorities will be a help to human progress."¹ That is profoundly true. Democracy is

¹ Wallas, *Our Social Heritage*, p. 239.

menaced at the moment by all sorts of dictatorial minorities—Bolshevist and Fascist, Revolutionary and Reactionary. It needs to strengthen itself against all of them. It demands the aid of all the friends of progressive order and orderly progress, so that it may establish for the coming age the principle of the rule of the majority.

Now the rule of the majority implies authority and demands obedience just like any other form of rule. It does so, indeed, more than any other form of rule. For in the democratic State the sovereignty resides in the community as a whole ; public opinion is the source of law ; the social conscience fixes the ethical standard ; the fount of authority is the general will. And as each individual citizen and each associated group of citizens has full scope, not merely by vote, but by voice, pen, and organisation, to mould opinion, to educate conscience, to determine the general will, government, as being self-government, has a peculiar claim to obedience. The position of a "conscientious objector," who, having failed to convert the majority, proceeds to defy it and deny its authority, is an impossible and intolerable one. On the one hand, as a member of the political community, he exercises all his rights of voice and vote, demands and enjoys all the protections and privileges of the organised society of which he claims to be a member. On the other hand, as though outside the political community, he refuses obedience, claims membership of a superior society, and refuses submission to the general will. He cannot have it both ways. He must be regarded as either in or out. If he refuses obedience, he forfeits his claim to citizenship. No "conscientious objector" or "passive resister"—

however noble his motive or respectable his character—should be allowed to retain his right to vote (that is, to make laws for others and impose obedience upon them). Edward I., with perfect justification, would have declared all such objectors and resisters outlaws—witness his treatment of the recalcitrant clergy in the closing years of the thirteenth century. We at the present day, under the impulse of mercy and in the interests of general order, are not likely to be so logical. Nevertheless such spectacles as that of the Poplar Guardians alternately defying the law as applied to themselves and enforcing it as applied to revolting ratepayers; or on the one hand fomenting rebellion and on the other hand appealing to the police to protect them from enraged rebels, is too anomalous to be tolerable.

The duty of obedience to constituted authority is imperative in a democracy. Even if a law sanctioned by the majority violates the moral sense of a minority, nevertheless there is an obligation upon the minority to obey it, until they can turn themselves into a majority and rescind it. For they should bear in mind, first, the possibility that on the moral question the majority is right and they are wrong;¹ secondly, the provision made by the constitution for the propagation of their views, and the means lawfully open to them to secure the conversion of the opinion, conscience, and will of the community; thirdly, the certainty that if and when they secure a majority in favour of their principles, they will demand and enforce the obedience of all to them, and

¹ Cf. Cromwell's immortal words to the rigid sectaries of his time: "I beseech you, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, think it possible you may be mistaken."

will allow no "conscientious objection." It is this last consideration which causes such Labour leaders as Mr. Ramsay MacDonald and Mr. Clynes so much uneasiness when their followers resort to resistance. Says Mr. MacDonald: "The Socialist more than any other citizen should preserve that respect for the political institutions of Democracy which alone makes the decrees of these institutions acceptable to the people."¹

Whether or not the Democracy will ever be converted to Socialism is a matter concerning which opinions may differ widely. But in the acceptance of Mr. Ramsay MacDonald's rule all may and should agree, viz. that unless and until Socialism or any other minority creed is adopted by the majority, its advocates must content themselves with the rôle of propagandists and preachers. They must not, in repudiation of the "political institutions of Democracy," attempt to impose their will upon the majority by force. They must obey in order that they may become fit to rule. This principle has as its corollary the implication that if and when Socialism or any other minority creed is adopted by constituted democratic authority, those who detest it must nevertheless submit. The revolt of the Poplar ratepayers is as anti-democratic and indefensible as is the Communistic lawlessness of the Poplar Board of Guardians.²

¹ Ramsay MacDonald, *Socialism and Government*, p. xxv.

² For the vagaries of the Poplar Board of Guardians, the impotence of the Local Government Board, and the revolt of the Poplar ratepayers, see the newspaper press during October 1923. On the general question of the duty of obedience to democratic authority see T. H. Green, *Principles of Political Obligation*, pp. 110-120; J. MacCunn, *Ethics of Citizenship*, pp. 81-83, and L. T. Hobhouse, *Liberalism*, pp. 149-150.

CHAPTER IV

THE MACHINERY OF DEMOCRACY

"Democracy is a form of government which can justify itself only by sorting out the best brains of the nation and setting them to the work for which they are fittest."—Professor RAMSAY MUIR.

"Democracy, in the best sense of the word, means the self-government of the people; and this is the highest possible conception of government."—Professor J. S. MACKENZIE.

"Democratic institutions are good or bad according to the quality of the people from whom they draw their power."—Mr. LLOYD GEORGE.

"The individual, so far from surrendering some of his capacity for life through his fellowship with others, acquires and extends that capacity wholly in and through such fellowship."—Professor BERNARD BOSANQUET.

"The individual is not sacrificed, he is brought to reality in the State."—Professor JOHN DEWEY.

"Nationality is still the strongest bond that can join men together, and so long as it retains its strength there will remain a great and fruitful province for the national state."—Mr. G. D. H. COLE.

§ 19. *The National State.*

THE *method* of Democracy has, as we have just seen, been fairly well determined during the ages that are past. It is the method of discussion, consent, and active obedience. Its essence is collective will as opposed to sectional force. As a result of testing experience and clarifying thought, extended through many generations, a mode of procedure—the so-called parliamentary procedure—has been developed which,

when honestly and intelligently applied, is an admirable *organon*, the most perfect yet devised by man, for eliciting opinion, achieving agreement, and expressing resolution. It is one of the glories of British constitutional history that so much has been done by the political genius of the people of these islands towards the process of perfecting this invaluable instrument.

But, though the general principles and the main lines of procedure proper to Democracy are clearly laid down, and may be regarded as suited to all circumstances and valid for all time, it is otherwise with the *machinery* of Democracy. Democratic communities differ so much among themselves in size, in nature, and in circumstances, that an infinite variety of institutions exists, or has existed, each type among which is adapted to certain conditions and not adapted to others. For instance, Direct Democracy was well fitted to be the governmental machine of the small City-State of the Hellenic world ; but its use is wholly impossible in the National State of the present day.

The National State is the dominant type of community in the modern world. Its dominance may conceivably be merely a passing phase. There were countless ages of the past when it had no existence. The pre-political world was organised in hunting-packs, or pastoral tribes, or agricultural clans. The early political world was one of vast heterogeneous Empires or tiny City-States. The Middle Ages saw the prevalence of a cosmopolitan society based on a universal religion. The modern National State was the twin-sister of the Reformation. Both were the offspring of the spirit of Secularism which revolted

against clerical ascendancy, and the spirit of Solidarity which led to the fusion of the countless tribal communities, autonomous municipalities, feudal fiefs, social classes, and economic fraternities which had prevailed beneath the surface of Mediaeval Christendom. If, on the one hand, the rise of the National State involved a schism of the Catholic Church, on the other hand it implied a vast unification and consolidation in the political sphere. It was the largest secular community which the Teutonic peoples had ever succeeded in establishing. And not only the largest but the highest. For its aim was, and is, "the fullest possible development in all its citizens of the forces and faculties of man."¹ Not unjustly has it been spoken of by a great thinker as "So far man's greatest achievement."²

"So far"! Is it then possible to conceive of something greater and higher? It is; and many seers and prophets are engaged in the search for the larger and loftier ideal. The Bishop of Manchester dreams of the revival of a sovereign Catholic Church which shall "direct the National State along the path which leads to the Kingdom of God."³ Mr. Ramsay MacDonald exclaims as he contemplates the glories of the Second Socialist International: "This surely is the nucleus of the Parliament of Man."⁴ Lenin's hopes are fixed rather on the Third International with its co-ordination of the cosmopolitan proletariat. Lord Robert Cecil looks to the League of Nations to develop into a truly world-wide society. Of these ideals of Super-State organisation we may

¹ Jones, H., *Principles of Citizenship*, p. 118.

² *Ibid.* p. 12.

³ Temple, W., *Church and Nation*, p. 54.

⁴ MacDonald, *Socialist Movement*, p. 242.

say (1) that Bishop Temple's is desirable but impossible, because it involves a unity of belief which is wholly unattainable ; (2) that Messrs. MacDonald and Lenin's aspirations are neither desirable nor possible, because both the Internationals are class organisations, and are themselves torn by internal schisms ; (3) that Lord Robert Cecil's ideal is practicable and, with proper safeguards, desirable. The safeguards are these, first, that the National State shall be recognised as so far man's greatest achievement and that it shall be left, with as little modification as possible, as the basis of the new political order ; secondly, that the process of the creation of the new order shall not be hastened beyond the pace of the slowly advancing public opinion of the world ; and thirdly, that meantime the National State shall retain its place as the sphere of man's noblest activities and the source of all his civic capacities.

§ 20. *The Electorate.*

The National State, then, is the dominant political unit of the present day. Its immense vitality was demonstrated by the Great War. Beyond expectation and calculation it exercised commanding sway over the minds and consciences of men. When patriotism appeared and country called, drowned were the voices of universal religions, international proletariats, and cosmopolitan humanitarians. This is a fact that should be recognised. It is fundamental. At the present time and for many generations to come, the National State is the largest sphere in which the average man will be able to perform his duty to mankind. Differences between nations are

so deep and so real that they cannot be ignored or overridden. They are based on traditions, habits, customs, and beliefs sanctified by immemorial antiquity. Nay, more, they go down to the very roots of being, and spring from physical, mental, and moral divergences old as the human race itself. It is almost inconceivable that at any future date, however remote, can white, black, yellow, and red men form a single homogeneous community except of the loosest federal type. Nor is it certain that it is desirable that they should do so. For as Mazzini—equally ardent as cosmopolitan and nationalist—perceived in his day, heterogeneity is necessary to progress. Each race, each nation, each state has it in its power to make some unique contribution to the common civilisation of the world. In the Parliament of Man, as in the tiniest parochial council, development and advance are due not to an aggregation of similarities but to an integration of differences. Nationality, duly subordinated to Humanity and dedicated to the service of Mankind, has still a great and noble part to play in the history of the world.

To say that the National State is the dominant political unit of the present day is only to say in other words that it possesses the attributes of sovereignty. These attributes are external independence and internal supremacy. They are not qualities arbitrarily assigned to it. Wherever is the dominant political unit, there they must be: the sovereignty which they connote is as inevitable as is the centre of gravity of a mass; it may be difficult to locate, but somewhere it is. The jurist when he tries to determine the seat of sovereignty is content to look for

the supreme legislative authority : he finds it in Britain, in the King, in Parliament. The political philosopher, however, is not satisfied with the mere location of the legislature whose commands are habitually obeyed by the bulk of the community. He asks what is the power behind the legislature which makes its enactments operative : he finds it in Britain, in the electorate. But even here he cannot rest. For the electorate consists of barely 50 per cent of the total population, and it is itself the agent of a vaster community. Behind the electorate is the people-as-a-whole, and in public opinion the ultimate sovereignty resides.

The electorate is merely an agent ; the machinery which it controls is public property ; the voting power which it exercises is a trust on behalf of the community. It holds the accumulated treasures of the past ; it directs the doubtful destiny of the present ; it determines to no small extent the pathway of the future. Its functions, as we have already seen, are twofold. They are, first, to lay down the general lines of policy ; secondly, to select the best men to carry them out. More than that the electorate cannot be expected to do ; more than that it cannot efficiently accomplish. For, as Sir Sidney Low well and wisely says : " Politics is a business of complicated details in which the knowledge and experience of the trained mind are needed." . . . " Government is more technical than ever it was before." . . . and " The great majority have neither the time nor the mental concentration to study politics in a systematic fashion." ¹

These considerations imply the condemnation and

¹ Low, *Governance of England*, pp. xxxiii, 203, 210.

repudiation of such devices as the Referendum, the Initiative, and the Recall, by means of which the electorate sometimes seeks to retain direct control over political issues. Direct Democracy is impossible in the complicated world of to-day. Representative Democracy is alone feasible. And democratic representatives must be a free, though responsible, aristocracy of talent, and not mere delegates, transmitters, gramophones, or automatic voting-machines.

§ 21. *The Constituencies.*

When the electors—in their own interest and in the interest of the large community which they represent—have agreed upon the limits of their functions, there arises the important practical question, By what means shall they discharge their electoral duties? How shall they be grouped for voting purposes? What method of representation shall be adopted?

One interesting scheme is that recently (1923) introduced into Italy. The whole country is organised as a single constituency, and each elector votes for 356 candidates. The defects of this scheme are obvious: no elector has time or knowledge to select so many out of the thousands who solicit his support; every elector has to vote, is intended to vote (and indeed in Italy is compelled to vote) for the 356 nominated by his party; he has no effective choice of either men or measures.

Less objectionable, because not quite so unwieldy, are the various schemes of large constituencies with numerous members selected by a method of proportional representation, such as that invented by

Thomas Hare, and commended by John Stuart Mill. The defects of these schemes consist not so much in the inorganic bigness of the constituencies, as in the undesirable consequences of the adoption of the academic device of proportional representation. Although at first sight it seems equitable and advantageous that by means of P.R. all sorts of miscellaneous minorities should secure seats in the Legislature in the ratio of their numerical strength in the country, yet such is not the case. Parliaments are business bodies with vast and urgent practical problems to deal with quickly and efficiently. For the satisfactory conduct of affairs they require a strong and homogeneous majority balanced and regulated by a single critical and coherent opposition. To this essential two-party system P.R. is necessarily fatal. It converts Parliaments into menageries of groups, or museums of curiosities. Struggles between majorities and minorities; debates between the advocates of countless conflicting politics; even the early phases of fruitful discussions among people eager to harmonise and integrate differences, are proper to the arena of the constituencies but not to the seat of government. The preliminary classification needs to be effected on the lower plane of public opinion, not to be carried to the high stage of sovereign authority. Thus the fatal objection to P.R. is not that the complexity and prolixity of its working is puzzling to the electorate (though that is serious enough), but that it breaks up coherent parties and substitutes for these coteries of cranks; that it thus conduces to log-rolling and corruption; that it narrows the interests and lessens the freedom of representatives, destroys the hope of fruitful discussion (since each member tends to the

unyielding champion of some sectarian cause), dissipates political energy, and, finally, culminates in legislative deadlock and administrative futility. Mr. Frederic Harrison was not speaking too strongly when he said: "The various professorial devices for regenerating society by giving votes to minorities . . . exhibit to my mind only the art of constitution-making in its stage of pragmatistical dotage."¹ The practical experience of Sir James Craig in Northern Ireland confirms Mr. Harrison's opinion. Speaking at Belfast on March 23, 1923, he said: "Proportional Representation has got to go. It has been an absolute failure in Northern Ireland, and I believe it will be found to be a failure wherever it is tried."

In short, no better method of democratic representation can be, or need be, devised than the old and simple method of straightforward ballot in small local constituencies. So-called "functional representation," now so strongly urged by the milder type of revolutionary—that is, direct representation of trade unions, co-operative societies, and similar bodies—would degrade politics to the level of economics; would acerbate class struggles and sectional conflicts; would cause national and humanitarian issues to be lost sight of amid the clash of warring sectaries; would convert the House of Commons into a Trade Union Congress, stirred into a tenfold fury by the presence of the representatives of quarrelling churches and wrangling trusts.²

¹ Harrison, *Order and Progress*, p. 22.

² Functional Representation may have a useful purpose to fulfil in the constitution of Second or Revising Chambers.

§ 22. *The Two-Party System.*

The *strength* of the British parliamentary system used to reside, and still ought to reside, in its local constituencies : its *efficient working* used to be due to, and still depends upon, the organisation of its active politicians into two, and only two, parties.

As to the old local constituencies, one of the gravest mistakes made by the framers of the various Reform and Redistribution Bills of the nineteenth century was the breaking of them up. The ancient cities, boroughs, and counties had a vigorous and independent life of their own, with venerable traditions, strong emotions, and definite tendencies of thought. Parliament was in origin and in essence a *communitas* of these *communitates*, and its vitality was derivative from theirs. The true remedy for such electoral anomalies as had sprung up owing to increase of population and industrial migration, was not the manipulation of the constituencies—partition, amalgamation, expansion, or extinction—a process which lent itself to much chicanery ; but rather the proportionment of representation to population—a process which could have repeated without any disturbance, and to the maintenance of equity, after every decennial census. Nothing, even now, is more urgent than the recovery of a vigorous local life.

Within both constituencies and Parliament the effective working of democratic institutions requires the existence of two, and only two, political parties. Isolated individuals are impotent. To be influential they must combine with such of their fellows as share their leading ideas and their dominant emotions. They must organise themselves into parties, sub-

ordinating minor differences to great agreements, and suppressing anti-social idiosyncrasies. Since every question can be ultimately reduced to the issue of Yes or No ; since for purposes of decision it must be so reduced ; and since in Parliament there are only two lobbies, the continued existence of more than two parties is an anomaly and a fruitful cause of anomalies (*e.g.* three-cornered contests and minority representation). The purification of politics imperatively demands the return to the two-party system based on differences of opinion and feeling concerning the fundamental issue, or kindred issues, of the day. The fact that fundamental issues change from time to time involves the periodical reorganisation of parties, and during the process third parties or errant groups inevitably appear. But they ought to be, and in Britain usually are, merely transitional phenomena. Canningites, Peelites, Adullamites, Liberal Unionists, are but migrants on their way to a new home. This country, at any rate, has a healthy antipathy to permanent dissentients from the two great orders.

As the anonymous author of that remarkable book *The Pomp of Power* well says (p. 219) : " Parliamentary government originated in England, and its basis, its very essence, is that there should be two parties in the State holding contradictory opinions upon the vital issues of the day."

It is the function of party to clarify political issues, to lay before the electorate carefully considered and practicable programmes, to select capable and well-qualified leaders, to instruct and organise public opinion. Public opinion is sovereign. The general will of the community-as-a-whole is the final determinant of all issues in a true democracy. The

electorate is the agent of the community, and party is the educator of the electorate. In order that party may be kept in due subordination, it is necessary that the mass of the electorate should retain its superiority to party, and that it should be prepared with free intelligence to judge party programmes and party leaders, supporting the good and rejecting the evil, and compelling party to serve the interests of patriotism and humanity.

At the present moment British politics are passing through a transitional stage. Three parties and several vacillating groups distract the attention of the electorate and make havoc of the representative system. There are many signs, however, of a return to normal conditions. It is becoming evident that the supreme issue of the day is the issue of Socialism *versus* Individualism ; of Authority *versus* Freedom ; of Dependence on Doles *versus* Self-sufficiency ; of enforced Equality *versus* Natural Liberty ; of Confiscation *versus* New Creation ; of Direct Action *versus* Democracy ; of the maintenance of the Existing Order *versus* Utopian and Revolutionary Reconstruction. It is an issue that goes down to the very roots of society. Differences which divide Conservatives from most Liberals are as nothing compared with the differences which separate both from Socialists, Syndicalists, and Anarchists. The new line of cleavage in politics runs through the old Liberal party. The true place of the majority of Liberals is union with moderate Conservatives in a Great Constitutional party. The minority of Liberals—most of the so-called Wee Frees—have their natural affinity with the milder Socialists, and many of them have recognised this fact and have joined the Socialist-

Labour group. So things seem to shape themselves for the new two-fold amalgamation. Neither Die-Hards on the extreme right, nor Communists on the extreme left, have any place in practical politics; the former are as good as dead; the latter are for ever unborn.

The sooner the two-party system is restored the better. It is needed for that intelligible debate which is the indispensable preliminary to creative discussion. "Everything," says Dr. Ernest Barker, "depends upon the re-establishment of healthy, evenly-balanced parties, based upon definite principles, and serving as the organs—the only possible organs—of public opinion."¹

§ 23. *Parliament and its Legal Sovereignty.*

Parliament in Great Britain is the supreme organ of public opinion. In it, for governmental purposes, the power of the electorate and the sovereignty of the community are concentrated. The fact that it is endowed, for the term of its office, with unlimited law-making capacity, sometimes causes jurists to speak of it as the "legal sovereign," and the expression is permissible. But it is important to remember that this so-called "legal sovereignty" is merely a faculty or function conferred upon it by the ultimate "political sovereign," viz. the public opinion and the general will of the community acting through the electorate. It is necessary that in every political community there should be such a single and supreme organ of the sovereign power; for divided authority is only another name for anarchy. Sovereignty

¹ *Edinburgh Review*, July 1921.

itself, of course, cannot be divided. For if "sovereignty" is divided it ceases to be sovereignty; and if each supposed "portion of sovereignty" be indeed sovereign, then every sphere within which such portion is sovereign is separated from the rest and becomes an independent unit. Further, it is no more possible to eliminate this undivided sovereignty from an organised community than it is to eliminate the single centre of gravity from a mass. If you have two or more centres of gravity you have two or more distinct masses. So, somewhere in every organised community there is, and inevitably must be, some power, unique and indivisible, which is supreme over all persons and in all causes. The only conceivable source of voluntary human action is unified will, and there can no more be a divided will in an operative community than there can be in an efficient individual.

The name usually given to the community within which resides this sovereign will is "The State," and it is best to use the term in this sense and in no other. But political terminology is not always exact, and we must constantly remember to look beyond names to realities. For instance, Father Figgis quite rightly says: "In the Middle Ages, the Church was not *a* State but *the* State." In other words, the will which was dominant throughout Christendom was that of the Papal Hierarchy, and the community within which that sovereign will was operative was the Church. The so-called "States" or political communities of the Middle Ages were not States in the proper connotation of the word; they were subject and tributary principalities. The Church was properly the solitary State. Again, at the present time, there is a revolt against "The State" and its sove-

reignty, with an implication that if you can get rid of "The State," that is, the political organisation of society, you can at the same time eliminate sovereignty altogether. It is a vain and foolish illusion, due to a confusion between names and things. If you destroy the present political organisation of society and set up in its place (as the Guild Socialists would) a complex of trade unions, churches, and local groups, you simply create another State of an extraordinarily unwieldy sort, and shift the ultimate organ of sovereignty—the agent of the united will of the community—to a more remote centre of a more nebulous mass. You do not and cannot destroy sovereignty merely by making it difficult to discover where its single and supreme organ resides. That it *is* even now sometimes hard to locate this organ may be admitted. Some American writers, for example, profess themselves unable to determine its situation in their complicated Federal Constitution, and they occasionally proceed to argue that it is not there at all. It is there, nevertheless: it resides in that composite body which possesses the omnipotence necessary to alter the Constitution.

In Great Britain there is no difficulty in locating the supreme organ of sovereignty. As we have already noted, it resides for governmental purposes in Parliament—*i.e.* King, Lords, and Commons. This body can issue general commands in all causes—political, ecclesiastical, or economic—which all subjects are bound to obey. Behind this legal depositary or agent of sovereignty, determining its constitution and regulating its activities, stands the electorate. But even the electorate, vast as it is, is itself only the depositary or agent of sovereignty.

The ultimate sovereignty resides in the community-as-a-whole, and consists in its public opinion, its social conscience, and its general will.

§ 24. *The Delegations of Parliament.*

“Much is lost in logical clearness,” says Professor D. G. Ritchie, one of the most powerful and acute of recent political thinkers, “and nothing is gained in practical politics, by endeavours to shirk the necessarily unlimited character of sovereignty.”¹ A single ultimate authority there is and must be in every political community, and for governmental purposes it must act in the last resort through a single organ capable of unity of will, clarity of expression, and efficiency of action. We have seen that in Great Britain this supreme and final organ is Parliament. It rules in virtue of the mandate of the electors, and as representing the ultimate sovereignty of the general will of the community.

It is an interesting study to trace the process by which the British Parliament has attained its present pre-eminence as the supreme and final representative of the national will. This process is the central theme of our Constitutional History; for, as Bishop Masterman remarks, “In so far as the course of English Constitutional History can be summarised in a phrase, it may be described as a drift towards Democracy.” On the one hand, King and Parliament together had to vindicate national independence against the claims of extraneous authorities, and at the same time to establish law and order among a turbulent and naughty populace. On the other hand,

¹ Ritchie, *Natural Rights*, p. 243.

Parliament had to transmute itself from a mere council of advice and of consent to royal commands into a ruling assembly; while within Parliament the elected representatives of the Commons had to assert their ascendancy over hereditary Peers and nominated Bishops. This manifold process has only recently (1912) been completed. The effect of the *Parliament Act* was to the House of Lords what the effect of the Revolution of 1689 had been to the Monarchy: it reduced its influence to those of a mere temporary and suspensory veto, leaving the effective control of legislation in the hands of the House of Commons.

Thus Parliament, and in particular the House of Commons, has acquired the position of the supreme agent of the public opinion, social conscience, and general will of the Sovereign Democracy of Britain. It must maintain and consolidate that position. There are, of course, in the country many other authorities, local and functional, which represent sections—some of them very large sections—of the people. Not a few of these, such as the corporations of ancient Boroughs, or the assemblies of the Church, claim an antiquity older than that of Parliament itself, and a communal life independent of any governmental institution. That claim need not be disputed, but it is quite irrelevant. Whatever may have been their origin, they have all been reduced to a position of subordination. None of them any longer represents the community-as-a-whole. Such local authorities as the Councils of Boroughs and Counties have for ever shed whatever autonomy they may have possessed in the Middle Ages. Such old functional authorities as the Convocations of the Church, what once were national or supra-national,

have sunk to the rank of sectarian synods. Such new functional authorities as the Executives of the great Trade Unions stand merely for the opinion, conscience, and will of industrial groups. The State is the society of societies which includes all local and functional organisations. Parliament is the authority which, as representative of the community-as-a-whole, must say the last word in respect of all causes, all groups, and all persons.

To say this is not to assert that Parliament must legislate directly for Boroughs and Counties; for Churches and Trade Unions; for Railways and Universities; for Dominions and Protectorates; or for any other of the countless corporations which it has under its control. On the contrary, Parliament may, with the greatest relief to itself and the highest advantage to the community, delegate a large measure of its powers to local and functional authorities. But it must make it clearly evident that all such powers are in fact delegated and derived; that they are no longer, if they ever were, inherent in the bodies which exercise them. The supreme authority of Parliament over Churches and Trade Unions and all other associations whatsoever, whether voluntary or involuntary, is the cardinal principle of the British Democracy. It is the assertion of the superiority of the community-as-a-whole over each and all of its sections. It is the maintenance of the sovereignty of its general will over the particular wills of constituent groups.

PART II

LABOUR

“In theory the Labour Party worships the idea of democracy.”—
Mr. PHILIP SNOWDEN.

“The Labour Party is a party without faith, without hope, and without charity.”—Mr. AUSTIN HOPKINSON.

“The Labour Party is mainly cemented by the fact that it is up against something else. Its chief bond of fellowship is in fact a common enmity.”—The BISHOP OF MANCHESTER (Dr. W. TEMPLE).

“The Labour Party has up to the present made progress largely because no organised and powerful party has been engaged in calling attention to its deficiencies.”—The EARL OF BIRKENHEAD.

“We [the Labour Party] were blind leaders of the blind. We ignored almost everything that was vital in humanity.”—Mr. SHAW DESMOND.

“The majority of the electors in this country will never vote for the Labour Party unless they are assured that a Labour Government will be controlled by common sense and moderation.”—Mr. PHILIP SNOWDEN.

CHAPTER V

THE POSITION OF LABOUR

"If men would only define the terms which they use in argument, most controversies would end before they begin."—Sir THOMAS RALEIGH.

"Labour is the man with nothing but his hands. Labour by itself can only gather berries or dig up roots."—Mr. HARTLEY WITHERS.

"Labour has still a good deal to learn as to facts, and as to ways and means. It does not know the facts."—Mr. G. BERNARD SHAW.

"Trade Unionists will have to acquire a more comprehensive understanding of the working of democratic institutions."—Mr. SIDNEY WEBB.

"By no means all the aggregate British Trade Union members can steadfastly be relied on to vote for the Labour candidates."—Mr. SIDNEY WEBB.

"During recent years we [the Labour Party] have fought for the lower classes almost exclusively."—Mr. J. H. THOMAS.

§ 25. *The Meaning of the Term "Labour."*

MR. HARTLEY WITHERS, in his valuable little book on *The Case for Capitalism*, remarks (p. 51) that the term "Labour" is "frequently used in different senses, according to the confused and confusing habit of economists of using the same word in different meanings in different parts of their work." Economics and also the kindred science of Politics suffer from the fact that they have no technical terminology: they have to discuss their deepest profundities and their most esoteric mysteries in the language of the

man-in-the-street. The highly technical terminology of such sciences as Botany and Geology, or the elaborate symbolism of such sciences as Chemistry and Mechanics, imposes, it is true, a formidable barrier to entrants and novices; but when once the initial difficulties have been surmounted and the language has been mastered, absolute precision is achieved, so that progress is easy and secure. On the other hand, Economics and Politics—sciences of man, which are immeasurably more complex than the physical sciences—lure amateurs into their mazes by an ostentation of simplicity. They treat in well-worn words of things apparently familiar—*e.g.* of State and Government, of Law and Liberty; or of Wealth and Value, of Production and Distribution, of Capital and Labour. Only when the amateur gets well involved in the labyrinth does he discover the delusiveness of the apparent simplicity and the urgent need of the precision which comes of specialised vocabulary and exact definition. Many of our present-day controversies are mere logomachies which would be ended at once if only the combatants would define their terms. They are not strictly controversies at all, because the combatants under the disguise of a common phraseology are really talking about entirely different things.

The controversies about “Labour” furnish a case in point. We have already had occasion to remark¹ that in popular parlance the word “Labour” is used in two conspicuously distinct senses. On the one hand, it is used economically to connote the working classes; on the other hand, it is used politically to connote that very different thing, the Socialist Party.

¹ Above, p. 32.

The confusion which results from that ambiguity is clearly evident in such statements as those of Mr. Robert Williams in reference to the General Election of 1918: "In consequence of an antiquated political system, which is said to be democratic, Labour was denied three-fourths of its electoral influence."¹ Nothing but a little clarification of language is required to reduce this statement to nonsense. For it was "Labour" in the sense of the working-classes which inflicted upon "Labour" in the sense of the Socialist Party its overwhelming defeat. It was just because the electoral influence of Democratic Labour was supreme that the vociferous claim of Socialist Labour to represent it was so decisively rejected.

In view of this serious ambiguity—which the Socialist Party exploits to the full—it seems desirable to examine a little more closely the meaning of the term "Labour." Strictly, "Labour" is an abstract noun connoting toil or exertion. In Economics it stands for the effort, whether manual or intellectual, put forth by all who participate in the production of wealth. Even in the economic sphere, however, Socialists tend to abuse the word, and mould it by restriction to sinister ends. For, as Mr. Boris Brasol observes: "Marx, when speaking of labour, referred mainly to manual labour, and the word 'Labour,' as applied by common custom in Socialist literature, refers to manual labour only."² Much Socialist rhetoric becomes obviously clap-trap if the "Workers" whose cause the orators are supposed to be maintaining are recognised as including not only the proletariat of the unskilled, the incompetent, the communistic,

¹ Williams, *The New Labour Outlook*, p. 108.

² Brasol, *Socialism v. Civilisation*, p. 64.

the criminal, and the lazy, but also the skilled craftsman, the designer, the inventor, the overseer, the business-manager, the financier, the merchant, the expert in tariffs, trade routes, and world markets. These are the "Workers," the aristocracy of "Labour," to whom the world owes most of its productivity and wealth. Lenin, however, seems to go beyond even the normal Marxian fanatic in his exclusion of these classes, and in his restriction of the term "Worker" to a narrow circle of his own political supporters; for, as the well-known American Socialist, Mr. John Spargo, points out, he "has always refused to include the peasants in his definition of the working class"! ¹ The peasants, to him, because they insist in retaining private property in their holdings, are petty anti-proletarian bourgeoisie, who properly are to be regarded as exploiters, having no right to live. Thus we arrive at the curious conclusion that the Bolsheviki alone are the Industrial Workers of the World; that Lenin, who probably never did an honest day's work in his life, stands forth as the champion of "Labour"; that a horde of the most destructive devastators who have ever preyed upon a helpless humanity claim that they and their kind are the sole producers of all the wealth of the earth. Truly we need to pay some attention to our terminology, and to the uses of words! ²

§ 26. *The Working Man.*

Although "Labour" in its proper economic sense is an *abstract* term connoting effort undertaken for the

¹ Spargo, *Bolshevism*, p. 69.

² Mr. G. K. Chesterton pungently remarks: "The Bolshevik is, above all, a bourgeois—a Jewish intellectual of the town" (*Eugenics*, p. 109).

purpose of producing wealth, it is also, by a natural and justifiable extension of meaning, used in a *concrete* term to denote the person who puts forth such effort, *i.e.* the labourer, the working man or woman. It ought to be employed so as to include all who toil, whether by hand or by brain, for the well-being of mankind, whether it be material or immaterial wealth which they produce. Too often, however, the word has been limited by Marxians to manual workers who help to make material commodities only; whilst to Lenin and his disciples the term has lost all connection with either toil or production, and has become synonymous with those who by means of strikes, ca' canny, sabotage, and terrorism, seek to precipitate the Social Revolution. The I.W.W. has come to connote the Incurable Wastrels of the World.

Few terms, indeed, have suffered such hopeless degradation as the term "worker." From being the honourable name of one who by serviceable toil added to the welfare of the community and achieved thereby a noble independence for himself, it has fallen, until in the mouths of Communistic agitators it means a violent revolutionary who stops short of nothing—except work. It is better, therefore, to leave it to its corrupters, and to use in its place the still unspoiled and dignified expression "working man."

To be a working man is to possess the oldest title to nobility known among mankind. To put forth all one's powers of mind and of body in order to provide for one's own needs, to maintain one's family, and to minister to the necessities of the community, is the highest form of social service to which the ordinary individual can attain. It is through the efforts of working men, in the large and true sense of the term,

that the primitive barbarism of the race and the original inhospitality of the world have been removed, and the present vast possibilities of civilisation and comfort have been provided. The primeval state of nature, out of which by means of incessant toil early man emerged, was not a condition of plenty and felicity, but one of destitution, struggle, and ever-impending death. Poverty is not the product of the capitalist system ; it is the natural condition, and it was once the universal condition of mankind. It was not, indeed, until man became a capitalist that he was able to take the first steps towards wealth and security. Unaided "labour" could do (and can still do) no more than live from hand to mouth by plucking berries, scratching up roots, or laying hands on insects and small game. Mr. Ramsay MacDonald quite rightly says, "A man can go into the forest and tear boughs off trees with his hands for his fires, but he cannot fell trees without an axe of some kind, which is capital."¹ The possession of capital—in the shape of tools, implements, weapons, clothing, shelters—may, in fact, be regarded as one of the first things which distinctly raised man above the rank of his purely bestial ancestors, and made progress possible.

Once started on the upward path, man's finer brain and craftier hand enabled him to advance beyond his animal competitors with an ever-increasing acceleration. Differentiation set in. Manual labour became divided into many grades of skilled and unskilled activity. Then intellectual capacity slowly but surely asserted its ascendancy over merely manual dexterity, and the eminent places in the world of labour began to fall, naturally and rightfully, to

¹ MacDonald, *Socialist Movement*, p. 62.

discoverers, inventors, organisers, and other captains of industry. Finally, capital commenced in some degree to be separated, or at any rate to be separable, from labour, and it became possible for a thrifty owner of capital, apart from any work which he might do, to render valuable, indirect, or impersonal services to his fellows by lending, for productive purposes (instead of consuming), his stored-up wealth.

The great advances in material civilisation have been made by the discoverers, the inventors, the scientific agriculturists, and the skilled artisans, assisted by the organisers, the business-managers, the financiers, and the capitalists. The mere manual labourer, the proletarian, the unskilled toiler, "the man with nothing but his hands," has, of course, played his part, especially in the earlier stages of progress; but it has been a decreasing part, and a part which is now not very different from that played by the horse, the ox, or the machine. As mechanical invention has developed, his part has become increasingly unimportant and even superfluous. One of the main problems of the present time, indeed, is to know what to do with him. In so far as he exerts, or is prepared to exert, all his powers of mind and body for the maintenance of himself and his dependents, and for the service of the race, he retains his title to nobility and commands the highest respect. But all the same he is a burden and a problem. Apart from the beneficent influences of religion and philanthropy, he would have remained, and would still remain, not much above the level of his primitive ancestor of the prehistoric forests. As it is, his lot has been ameliorated far beyond his economic deserts, and (we may add) it would have been ameliorated still more but for

his inveterate proclivity to propagate his kind with reckless prodigality. After many centuries of gradual elevation in the social scale, however, he suddenly reached the crisis of his fate in the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century. But, involved with him in the same crisis, and implicated even more deeply, was the skilled artisan, the old-fashioned craftsman, whose inherited and traditional mysteries were menaced by the precision of the new machines, and by the might of the new steam-power. It was the threatened craftsman rather than the obsolescent unskilled labourer who devised the Trade Union as a defence against encroaching mechanism.

§ 27. *Trade Unions.*

The Trade Union—like the Factory System of production which stimulated its generation and development—is of distinctly British origin. It is one of the most remarkable and honourable manifestations of that genius for organisation and self-government which, in a peculiar degree, characterises the British peoples. It arose as the spontaneous and voluntary association of those skilled craftsmen whose way of life and standards of living were being threatened by the new methods of the Industrial Revolution. So early as 1710 the frame-work knitters formed a combination; but it was not till near the end of the century that the hatters (1772), the compositors (1775), and the cutlers (1790) followed suit. The objects of these early unions were to a large extent obscurantist and reactionary. The demands most frequently heard were for the re-enforcement of the obsolete Elizabethan regulation of industry; for the limitation of

the number of apprentices and the strict requirement of the seven years' pupilage ; for the fixing of wages and the standardisation of prices ; for the prohibition of the new machinery. Even Mr. Sidney Webb admits that the achievement of these objects would have been fatal to industrial advance and a deadly blow to the country's prosperity.¹ O that he could apply the same clear-sighted critical faculty to some of his own more recent demands ! It is not to be marvelled at, however, that working men, hard hit by revolutionary change and suffering intense privation, should have been unable, in those days of economic ignorance, to explore causes correctly, or to suggest with dispassionate accuracy the right remedies. Apart, however, from their immediate aims which were frequently mistaken, it was a great thing that they learned to combine for the furtherance of their common interests, and that they began to gain the training in the method of self-government which comes of effective association.

Until 1824, however, under a series of laws even more antiquated and obsolete than the Elizabethan Statute of Apprentices, the Trade Unions were illegal organisations. Such of them as managed to exist—and nearly fifty did so—had to disguise their agitations on behalf of higher wages and shorter hours under the protective shadow of activities proper to Friendly Societies. The repeal of the Anti-Combination Laws in 1824, secured largely by the exertions of Francis Place and Joseph Hume, freed them from the need of concealment and enabled them to embark on open propaganda. They did so with a vengeance ! The period 1824–1848 was the era of their violent and

¹ Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, chaps. i.-iii.

undisciplined youth. They gave rein to the resentment not unnaturally engendered by their long suppression. They listened credulously to the wild and subversive theories of such misguided teachers and false prophets as William Thompson, Thomas Hodgskin, Robert Owen, and Karl Marx. They became involved in the violences of the Chartists, and with the Chartists they rushed to ruin in 1848.

Long ere 1848, however, there had sprung up in the midst of the Trade Unions, wise and moderate men who were ready to assume responsibility, and, by dint of hard work, conciliatory methods, and prudent administration, restore the shaken credit of the Unions, rebuild their finances, and find for them a useful and honourable place in the industrial system of the country. Such men were William Allan of the Enginemakers, Robert Applegarth of the Carpenters, Edwin Coulson of the Bricklayers, Daniel Guile of the Ironfounders, and George Odger of the Shoemakers. The period during which these men, and such as these, controlled the policy of the great industrial associations—the period roughly 1848–1890—was the Golden Age of Trade Unionism in Britain. It saw the amalgamation of countless local unions into powerful federations ; it witnessed the inauguration of the Trade Union Congress (1868) ; it beheld the legal emancipation of the Unions by the cardinal statutes of 1871 and 1876 ; it marked the beginnings of direct Trade Union influence in Parliament when, in 1874, Messrs. Burt and Macdonald, leaders of the miners, secured seats. During the closing years of this great period, however, there were many signs that the reign of sanity and solvency was coming to an end. Severe trade depression, widespread

unemployment, falling wages, paralysing insecurity, prepared the way for a recrudescence of Socialism and for the formation of an aggressive Revolutionary Coalition which succeeded in capturing first the Trade Union Congress and then, one by one, the Executives of the Trade Unions themselves. It was a notable and ominous conquest, productive of incalculable disaster.

§ 28. *The "Labour" Party.*

In 1880 nothing could have seemed less likely than that the Trade Unions should have been captured by a small company of violent politicians, mainly of middle-class origin, armed with irrational dogmas, chiefly of German manufacture. Mr. Sidney Webb, indeed, makes the remarkable confession that so late as 1885 "all observers were agreed that the Trade Unions of Great Britain would furnish an impenetrable barrier against Socialist projects."¹ Yet only nine years later this "impenetrable barrier" had not only been pierced, but was in process of conversion into a Socialist citadel, arsenal, and inexhaustible commissariat. Well may Mr. Webb assert that "this revolution in opinion is the chief event of Trade Union history at the close of the nineteenth century." How is it to be accounted for?

It may be accounted for primarily by what Mr. Webb calls the "industrial contraction of exceptional character" which set in soon after 1880. British agriculture was badly hit by foreign competition, aided by cheap transport. Still more were British manufactures depressed by the novel and formidable rivalry of the recently industrialised Germany and

¹ Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 374.

the rapidly developing America. Now Socialism is a disease which flourishes most when economic vitality is low. It raged in the "hungry 'forties"; it died down during the prosperous period 1848-1880; it lifted its head once more when, in the 'eighties, adversity returned. Mr. H. M. Hyndman began the resuscitation of Marx in 1881, and soon succeeded in founding the Social Democratic Federation. In 1883 Mr. Sidney Webb inaugurated the Fabian Society and commenced his Collectivist campaign. Two years later the serious sapping of the Trade Unions began; for, as Mr. Webb clearly perceived and naïvely confessed, "the only practical basis" of a Socialist Party is "the wage-earning class," and its "only available machinery is the Trade Union organisation."¹ It is not often that the principles of the cuckoo, or the morals of the Old Man of the Mountain are so frankly avowed. The Socialists, in fact, will do anything for the Trade Unions except get off their backs. In 1887 began the formation by Socialist leaders of the "New Unions" of unskilled labourers, mere fighting machines, vast and minatory, designed to act as "storm troops" in the decisive attack on the Congress citadel. Writing in 1890, Mr. Frederic Harrison said: "In the course of the present year Socialism and Trade Unionism have been fused, and the New Unionism is the result."² The Old Unionism, however, had still to be dealt with. The issue was not long delayed. The so-called "Independent Labour Party," described by Mr. Tom Mann, its first secretary, as "an uncompromising Socialist organisa-

¹ Webb, Preface to *Fabian Essays*, quoted by Wallas, *Our Social Heritage*, p. 105.

² Harrison in *Nineteenth Century*, Oct. 1890.

tion," was established in 1893, and next year, at Norwich, the Trade Union Congress was carried by assault.

If we ask what was, and is, the source of the strength which thus enabled a handful of middle-class ideologues, at the head of the deluded legions of the unfortunate, to capture the citadel of sane Trade Unionism, the answer, I think, is (1) that the great political parties of the day, Liberal and Conservative alike, were too much engrossed in Irish, imperial, and foreign affairs to give adequate attention to the social and economic questions of the time; (2) that the Socialist I.L.P. won support within the Unions by concentrating its propaganda upon the sufferings and the grievances (real and imaginary) of the employed ("wage-slaves"), the unemployed (anxious to become "wage-slaves"), and the unemployable (incapable of becoming "wage-slaves"); (3) that the Socialist propaganda flattered the unfortunate of all classes by telling them that their failures and distress were not due to any defects in their own characters or capacities, but were attributable to their environment in general, and to the "capitalist system" in particular; and (4) that it promised them speedy redress at the expense of other people.

The Socialist capture of the Trade Union Congress in 1894 was followed by speedy and extensive developments. In 1900 a special Labour Conference decided on the establishment of "a distinct Labour Group in Parliament," to be maintained primarily by Trade Union funds. This "Labour Group"—which soon changed its name to "Labour Party"—was based upon "a federation consisting of Trade Unions, the I.L.P., the Fabian Society, and a large number of

Trades Councils and Local Labour parties.” From the first it was wholly dominated by Socialists, who began to employ the moneys and the machinery of the Trade Unions for the purposes of their political propaganda. In 1903 it was resolved that a compulsory levy should be made on all members of the party, regardless of their political opinions, at a fixed rate “for the maintenance of Labour M.P.’s and for assisting in paying election charges.” In other words, all Trade Unionists were to be compelled to support Socialism whether they approved of it or not. Rarely in this country had there been so impudent and monstrous a challenge to electoral independence and political freedom. The sequel was the Osborne Case (1904-1911) and the Trade Union Act of 1913.

§ 29. *The Osborne Case and After.*

On different occasions and in separate places the leaders of the Labour Party vehemently assert two distinct “rights,” for either of which, taken by itself, there is something to be said, but which taken together constitute a flagrant wrong, and one of the most grinding and intolerable tyrannies that have ever menaced British liberty. On the one hand they insist that every working man should be a member of his Trade Union. There are strong arguments in favour of this insistence. There is the analogy of the learned professions: no physician can practise, no barrister plead, no lawyer collect fees, no clergyman officiate, unless he has been duly admitted to the fraternity of his guild. There is the equitable contention that no man should enjoy the advantage, *e.g.* wage increases, which accrue from Trade Union

action without contributing to the funds of the Union. There is the consideration, which appeals as strongly to employers as to employed, that for purposes of collective bargaining it is desirable, if not indeed indispensably necessary, to have a compact and comprehensive organisation of all who stand in the ranks of labour. The case for the demand that every working man should be a member of his Union is a strong one, if taken by itself. But it cannot be taken by itself.

For, on the other hand, the Labour leaders contend that corporations should not be precluded from taking part in politics. They point out that federations of employees, railway companies, licensed victuallers, banking amalgamations, churches, universities, and countless other organised bodies enter the political arena, lay down policies, pay members, and in many ways, direct and indirect, push their principles or protect their interests. Now it may be gravely doubted whether all these bodies *ought* to participate in politics. But, without discussing this point in detail, we may lay down the general principle that the test question which decides this issue is: Are they voluntary associations or are they not? It is quite proper for voluntary associations of any sort, if they wish to do so, to enter into politics. It is a matter for the majority of the members to determine. If any member is aggrieved by the action of the majority, he can withdraw; and so long as he is entitled without prejudice to withdraw, the action of the association is not inconsistent with his political independence and his electoral rights.

What, however, is quite intolerable, wholly tyrannical, and utterly incompatible with the elementary

principles of democratic freedom, is that a person should at one and the same time (1) be compelled, on pain of economic ruin and physical violence, to join and remain in an association, and (2) be compelled without any redress to subscribe to and support whatever political action it may choose to take. If a man in order to qualify as a doctor is obliged to become a member of the Medical Association, then the Medical Association, as such, must keep out of politics. Similarly, if a workman is compelled to join a Trade Union, then the Trade Union, as such, must keep out of politics. It is entirely outrageous that he should *both* be forced into the Union *and* forced, irrespective of his political principles, to support the Socialism of the Labour Party.

This was the issue fought out in the Osborne Case. Those who are unacquainted with the details of this notable struggle for electoral liberty should read the story as told by Mr. Osborne himself in his excellent little book, *Sane Trade Unionism*, chapters viii.-x.¹ It is an absorbingly interesting record of sturdy British independence struggling for its democratic rights against almost incredible iniquity. As one reads it one vividly realises what Mr. R. H. Tawney means when he speaks, in another connection, of "the Lords of the Jungle who do not hunt by daylight."² Mr. Osborne ultimately triumphed over his peculiarly malignant and unscrupulous persecutors, and with him triumphed the cause of British representative democracy.

The Osborne judgement was a severe blow to the

¹ A Socialist view of the Osborne Case, marked by an extraordinary obliquity of judgement, is presented in Webb's *History of Trade Unionism* (1920 edition), pp. 608-31.

² Tawney, *Acquisitive Society*, p. 68.

Lords of the Socialist Jungle. It declared illegal their expropriation of Trade Union funds for political purposes; that is to say, it deprived the Socialists of their sole effective means of sustenance in a parliamentary career. Their outcry was prodigious. The Government so far yielded to it as (1) to adopt the practice of payment of members, so as to free all duly elected representatives of the people from dependence upon other than State resources; (2) to pass the Trade Union Act of 1913, which on the one hand authorised a Trade Union, as such, to take part in politics, provided that a majority of its members should vote for it to do so; but, on the other hand, required it to pay for its politics, not out of its general compulsory levies, but out of a special fund voluntarily contributed. This seemed at first sight to be a fairly equitable settlement.

§ 30. *The Present Situation.*

The Trade Union Act of 1913 did not provide the equitable settlement of the problem of Trade Union politics which had been intended. On the contrary, whether worked dishonestly or defied impudently, it has proved to be, in the hands of Socialist officials, a potent instrument of oppression and extortion. First, the ballot required by the law before political activity can be embarked upon, or funds of any sort paid out for political purposes, has been flagrantly violated. Secrecy has been denied. Terrorism has been brought to bear. Artificial majorities have been created by compulsion. In no less than twenty-four other cases the ballot has been omitted altogether, and contributions are being paid [1923] to the

Labour Party in respect of some 350,000 men who have not been even formally consulted. Secondly, the "contracting out" clause of the Act has been a source of a most grinding persecution. This clause requires every member of a Trade Union who wishes to avoid payment of the political levy on behalf of Socialism to fill up an "exemption notice," stating that he "objects to contribute" to it. In practice—and particularly among the miners—any person who claims exemption is a marked man, doomed to suffer countless indignities, humiliations, and injuries. Constitutional Trade Unionists groan under the tyranny of the obscure Lords of the Jungle whom this inadequate statute has irritated but not restrained. All are practically compelled to contribute to the political levy, however much they may object to do so. Finally, the general funds of the Unions are not protected from prostitution to political purposes as it was intended they should be. On the one hand, vast expenditure on Socialist propaganda can be camouflaged under such headings as "education," "administrative expenses," or "sundries." On the other hand, flagrant and open political raids on general funds pass unchallenged by the supposed protective authority. The Registrar of Friendly Societies is the official to whom has been assigned the difficult and ungrateful task of superintending the working of this deplorable statute. He apparently has come to the amazing conclusion that he cannot investigate any allegation to the effect that a Trade Union is spending money drawn from its general fund upon political objects. Hence, all safeguards being removed, the floodgates of corruption and confiscation are opened. The sovereign Lords of the Socialist Jungle, as Mr.

R. H. Tawney remarks in another connection, tend "to use the powers with which they have been endowed by nature or society, by skill or energy or relentless egotism or mere good fortune, without inquiring whether there is any principle by which their exercise should be limited."¹

That the Trade Union Act of 1913 requires drastic amendment is evident. In the interests of the constitutional working man, and in the cause of democratic government—to say nothing at this point respecting the vanishing Trade Union funds—genuine political liberty needs to be re-established in the industrial world. As is well known, Colonel Meysey-Thompson in 1922 brought in a private measure to remedy the more flagrant defects of the Act. In particular he proposed to substitute "contracting in" for the present "contracting out"; that is to say, he proposed to make it law that persons who wished to contribute, and not those who wished to secure exemption from contribution, should be the persons required to make the formal declaration. This private measure secured strong support from many prominent leaders of Constitutional Labour, but its defeat was accomplished by the might of the menaced Lords of the Jungle. It rests now, therefore, first with the Government to remedy this legislative enormity, and secondly, with Constitutional Labour, which is really in the majority, to recover its lost control over the Trade Union Executives. Unless Constitutional Labour does exert itself, organise itself, and reassert its power, it may soon find that not only its Trade Union money, but also its Parliamentary vote, is conscripted for Communism. For,

¹ Tawney, *Acquisitive Society*, p. 33.

says Mr. Robert Williams, " I look forward to the time when we shall regard an individual who supports a Capitalist candidate against a Labour candidate as as big a blackleg as any one who scabs in a Labour dispute."

CHAPTER VI

THE PROBLEMS OF LABOUR

"There is no cause of social unrest more potent than the haunting sense of insecurity which overhangs the mass of working people from childhood to the grave."—Professor RAMSAY MUIR.

"Unemployment remains the principal terror of the worker and his family. Nothing preys quite so strongly upon the mind of the man who is normally healthy and willing as the weary, soul-destroying task of a vain search for a job."—Mr. G. GREENWOOD.

"It is perhaps the most difficult of all industrial problems to give Labour a share of responsibility and power, while retaining discipline, efficiency, and proper organisation."—*The Round Table*, Sept. 1921.

"No army could exist which elected its own officers; or ship of which the captain was chosen by his crew."—Mr. FREDERIC HARRISON.

"The essence of industrial efficiency is the rule of the Many by the Few."—Mr. W. H. MALLOCK.

"Discontent is loudest in those least capable of grasping opportunity when it is offered."—Professor HUMPHREY.

§ 31. *Industrial Unrest.*

INDUSTRIAL unrest, so evident in the world of labour at the present time, is largely the consequence of the political propaganda of Socialists, Syndicalists, and Anarchists. "Much—perhaps most—of what purports to be Labour utterance," well says Mr. W. A. Orton, "is not so much Labour speaking as Labour being spoken to."¹ The supposed "Voice of Labour" pouring forth vehement complaints is all too often

¹ Orton, *Labour in Transition*, p. 10.

but the magnified result of the ventriloquial jugglery of clever revolutionary agitators. It was the deliberate and avowed purpose of Karl Marx to cause industrial unrest, to prevent social harmony, to acerbate the class struggle, to frustrate economic reform, in order the more speedily to precipitate the culminating revolution. His followers at the present day diligently pursue the path which he mapped out for them. "In nearly all our trade unions," says Mr. C. Jesson, "there is a small but active minority which is using the machinery of our trade organisations for revolutionary purposes."¹ Where genuine grievances exist they aggravate them and inflame the passions generated by them; where genuine grievances do not exist they invent them. The whole Marxian system, indeed, with its perverted philosophy, its false history, its erroneous economics, and its malignant spirit, is a chronic irritant, destructive of industrial peace. The admitted purpose of the devotees of Marx is "to render impossible the present methods of production."² It is for the acknowledged end of stopping production and hastening bankruptcy that they secure and employ their hold over the Trade Union Executives. "The miner's object," says Mr. G. D. H. Cole, for example, "is to paralyse the mine when and as he pleases."³ Is it therefore to be marvelled at that, as one of our youthful intellectuals naïvely remarks, "the Capitalist System does not work as smoothly as it might at the present time"?⁴ As well might one marvel that an engine does not work smoothly when boys are continually throwing grit into its bearings and thrusting bars into its

¹ *The Times*, August 27, 1920.

² Mellor, *Direct Action*, p. 43.

³ Cole, *World of Labour*, p. 224.

⁴ Gollancz, V., *Industrial Ideals*, p. 56.

wheels for the precise purpose of wrecking it! Mr. Sidney Webb writes exuberantly of "*The Decay of Capitalist Civilisation*." It is not, as a matter of fact, decaying so fast as he supposes, or as he would like. But nothing short of miraculous vitality could enable it to survive not only the ordinary chances of mortality but also the destructive attacks of malignant foes within its borders.

In two ways, then, do Socialist, Syndicalist, and Anarchist agitators cause or aggravate industrial unrest: first, by disseminating inflammatory doctrines; secondly, by disturbing the working of our economic system, so that it cannot function properly. So serious are the consequences of their machinations that Mr. W. B. Faraday goes so far as to say, "There is only one cure for industrial unrest, and it is an easy one. Let the sane Trade Unionists purge their Unions of the extremists, as the nation purged Parliament in 1918 of the Pacifist and the pro-German."¹

Mr. Faraday, however, I feel, is taking a monocular view of the case when he ascribes industrial unrest *solely* to political agitation. It is necessary to recognise that besides these two causes of industrial unrest, perversely invented or artificially created, there are others deep and real without which the machinations of the politicians would be in vain. It is because the working man feels troubled and anxious in the midst of his toil, or in his vain search for employment, that he listens to the voice of the agitator. The following appear to be the main causes of his genuine discontents at the present day: (1) *Insecurity*. Between the working man and destitution there is only his

¹ Faraday, *Democracy and Capital*, p. 47.

weekly wage and his slender household goods ; he is continually haunted by the fear of what will happen to himself and those dependent upon him in case of sickness, accident, or dismissal ; he has no reserves of capital or of power.¹ (2) *Inadequate Remuneration*. He feels—whether rightly or wrongly—that he is not getting a fair proportion of the aggregate wealth produced by himself, in conjunction with the other agents of economic creation. (3) *Inhuman Conditions*. He is doomed in many cases to a monotony of existence unknown to the craftsmen of old ; he works in a depressing factory ; he makes but an uninteresting fragment of a product ; he lives in a mean street ; he lacks outlet for his natural activities of mind and body ; he can secure neither silence nor solitude. (4) *Insufficient Control*. Above all, he is not his own master ; he is compelled to obey whistles, bells, and gongs ; he cannot determine the conditions of his labour or the circumstances of his life ; he feels that he is reduced to a position unworthy of a man and incompatible with the dignity of a democrat.²

¹ At the present time [1923] a special form of this general problem of insecurity, viz. the problem of unemployment, has attained tragic dimensions. It has, indeed, become a separate problem, since it includes the cases of hundreds of thousands of youths who, having reached school-leaving age, have never been able to obtain employment of any sort.

² The question of Industrial Unrest has recently been dealt with more fully than is possible in the present cursory survey, by the following writers, among others : Appleton, W. A., *What we Want and Where we Are* ; Baillie, J. B., in *Labour and Industry* ; Faraday, W. B., *Democracy and Capital* ; Kirkaldy, A. W., in *Report of British Association*, 1921 ; Macassey, L., *Labour Policy, False and True* ; Muir, R., *Politics and Progress* ; and Orton, W. A., *Labour in Transition*. Besides the four major causes mentioned in the text, viz. insecurity and unemployment, inadequate remuneration, inhuman conditions, and insufficient control, the following contributory causes are discussed : rise in cost of living, Government interference, shortage of houses, resentment at ostentatious luxury of the new-rich, envy of the well-to-do, suspicion and unreason, the upheaval due to the War.

§ 32. *The Problem of Insecurity.*

Unrest is not in itself an evil. On the contrary, it is the indispensable condition of progress. Entire contentment is the characteristic rather of the well-fenced sheep or the fully-fed pig than of man, who has in his nature limitless possibilities of development, and should have unbounded aspirations. Among men it is only the defective who are wholly satisfied with their lot, however happy that lot may appear to be; it is the feeble in intellect, the weak in will, the poor in emotion, the decrepit in physique who have no desire for enlargement and improvement. If and when any person is possessed by a spirit of complete contentment, that person is in the first stages of stagnation and decay. For no one has, or ever can have, all that is necessary for the full realisation of all his capacities; and none should rest satisfied until he is perfected.

If, however, utter contentment (a rare phenomenon except in China) is a symptom of death, not less ominous, pathologically, is that excessive discontent which is so much more common in the West to-day. Not only Communistic street-orators, but even educated writers like Mr. R. H. Tawney in his *Acquisitive Society* and Mr. Sidney Webb in his *Capitalist Civilisation*, speak as though nearly everything except the Labour Party were evil in this worst of all possible worlds, and as though no hope of remedy remained, save in the sweeping away of our present economic order and the construction of a new order from the base. They fail to appreciate the wonders by which they are surrounded—the marvel of modern productivity; the miracle of that

voluntary organisation of industry and commerce by means of which such vast numbers of people find something to do and something to eat ; the ordered liberty of the democratic state which provides so large a measure of individual freedom and communal self-government. When day by day I see, and mingle with, the multitudes who travel into London to work I am filled with amazement, not that so many of them are insecure or unemployed, but that such a large proportion have found a place in the social organism. And I wonder what would happen to them all if the Communists were to seize power, and were to try to rebuild things according to their own fantastic plans. We need to speak more boldly of the merits of the "Capitalist System," and we need to sing more confidently the praises of things as they are.

The attitude of Burke was the right one. The present order is organically sound ; but environment is constantly changing, and incessant adjustment is necessary. Unrest in the body politic, like discomfort and pain in the human frame, is the indicator which tells of the call to readaptation. The problem of readaptation is never a simple or easy one. For the body politic is incomparably more complex and mysterious than any organism dealt with by biologists or anatomists. The need to study it, and the responsibility of treating it, demand and tend to elicit the highest powers of the human mind. Hence unrest is a constant stimulus to communal education and political progress.

At the present moment no question is more urgent than the question of how to give the manual worker a sense of security in life. How can he be saved from

the haunting dread of destitution? The question has become urgent since under the legislation of the last fifty years he has received some education and has acquired political power. His position of personal insecurity is not consistent with either his possession of knowledge or his place in the sovereign electorate of the British Empire.

In the case of the skilled workman in full work the answer is fairly simple. He must attain security by the same means and to the same degree as men of the middle class have attained it; that is to say, by making himself efficient, by working to the full extent of his capacity, by saving, by investing his savings, and by using the resources of insurance. The average workman has not yet learned the art of living. He does not know how to employ the machinery of investment and insurance which exists in profusion around him. This lamentable fact was borne home to me in the summer of 1920, when I spent six weeks in a mining neighbourhood. Wages were abnormally high; but the immense masses of the miners seemed to have no conception of what to do with their money except spend it before the next instalment became due. And too many of them spent it in the wildest extravagance, and even in the most degrading debauchery.

In the case of the unskilled labourer the case is not so simple. For the supply of unskilled labour is far in excess of the demand. That is the root cause of much of our industrial trouble. It is impossible to give a man security in an employment which the community does not require, or to give him a guarantee of work that can be more economically performed by a machine. In some form or other the unwanted

labourer is bound to become dependent on others for his subsistence. The utmost that can be done is (1) by a system of State-aided insurance to help him to survive periods of sickness or unemployment; (2) by a network of labour bureaux to assist him to obtain such work as he can do, and for which there remains a demand; (3) by a scheme of technical education to try to equip him for skilled activity; (4) by means of sound eugenic instruction to stem the torrent of low-grade life which annually pours into a congested world, thus diminishing the quantity and improving the quality of the population. In any case it is not desirable, either in the interests of the community or in the interests of the individual himself, that a person who can do nothing which his fellows require to be done, should be maintained either in secure idleness or in superfluous employment. The time has passed for makers of sedan chairs to claim "work or maintenance."

§ 33. *The Problem of Unemployment.*

The three qualities in human nature which render hopelessly impossible the adoption of any policy which involves a guarantee of "work or maintenance" are (1) the laziness of man; (2) the unprogressiveness of man; and (3) the excessive fertility of man. First, there are far too many "Weary Willies"—persons constitutionally averse from work and devoid of the sense of shame—who prefer a dole to work. Secondly, there are far too many "Old Stagers" who are content to saunter along in antique ways and to go on producing goods by obsolete methods, so long as there is no stimulus of necessity and want to quicken

their sluggish energies and waken their inventive abilities. Thirdly, there are far too many prolific proletarians who are prepared to go on producing enormous families of feeble-minded and physically defective infants so long as collective benevolence is pledged to provide maternity homes, endowments for motherhood, municipal milk, free education, free meals, free hospitals, free prisons, free lunatic asylums, and free pauper funerals. The average man urgently needs, and cannot do without, that sharp stimulus to activity and efficiency which is given by hope of gain and fear of want, by the prospect of advancement and the dread of unemployment.

All the same, at the present time the dread of unemployment and, still more, its actual incidence, have attained dimensions which far exceed those that serve any useful economic end. It has become a nightmare and a menace to the stability of our whole industrial system. The Report of the Committee of Nine which investigated the *Third Winter of Unemployment* (1921-1922) stated that the average number of persons out of work was 1,500,000 ; that their dependents were probably some 2,500,000 more ; and that the total cost, direct and indirect, of maintaining these four millions of the victims of adversity could not be estimated at a rate of less than £200,000,000 a year.¹

Of the causes which have thus thrown nearly one-tenth of our workpeople out of employment, many are temporary and exceptional. They include (1) the failure of our Continental markets, owing to the impoverishment caused by the War, and to the disorganisation perpetuated by the subsequent political

¹ *The Third Winter of Unemployment*, pp. 65-68.

upheavals ; (2) the instability and incalculability of the exchanges, owing to the Continental policy of reckless and dishonest inflation, coupled with the British policy of honest but over-rapid deflation ; (3) the deplorable exclusion of our manufactured goods from the territories both of our Allies and of our own Dominions by the erection of tariff barriers on their part ; and (4) the successful competition in neutral and even in our home markets of Americans, Germans, and other industrial peoples. But these causes, over which neither the people nor the Government of Great Britain has much control, have been greatly aggravated by (5) the high cost of production in this country, due to excessive wages, short hours, and low output ; (6) the disorder and indiscipline in the world of labour, due to Socialist agitation and lack of wise leadership ; (7) the short-sighted and injudicious policy of restriction of output adopted by many manufacturers ; and (8) the burden of heavy taxation, coupled with the Labour menace of a Capital Levy.

But employment is not exclusively a post-war problem. In a less acute, but still serious, form it has always been present and insistent. Hence behind the causes peculiar to the moment we have to seek for the deep underlying causes which result in the fact that at all times there are a considerable number of persons able and willing to work who cannot find any remunerative occupation. The deep underlying causes of unemployment which seem to me to be operating at the present moment are three. First, owing to the immense development of machinery, there is a steady decline in the demand for certain types of manual labour. Secondly, owing to the reckless fertility of the lower grades of humanity

there is a growing over-supply of precisely those types of labour for which in modern industry the demand is falling off. Thirdly, owing to the complexity of the problems involved, there is a lack of co-ordination of demand and supply both of labour itself and of the products of labour. It is lamentable and ludicrous to see 150,000 builders out of work, when 500,000 new houses are urgently wanted. It is exasperating and absurd to behold thousands of women receiving the dole of idleness when half a million homes are calling in vain for domestic service. It is also obviously unsatisfactory to know that our boot-warehouses are choked with unmarketable stock while tens of thousands of people are walking the streets ill-shod or wholly un-shod.

When we turn to contemplate the proposed remedies for unemployment, we have to note first the Socialist's simple panacea of "work or maintenance." We have already observed that so far from solving the problem it would render it for ever insoluble. The Socialist policy might be feasible if all men were industrious, all efficient, all honest, all sober, all thrifty, all eager for the public good, and if there were no "population question." With human nature as it is, the guarantee of "work or maintenance" is entirely impossible. It would speedily reduce the whole country to the state of bankruptcy and disorder to which the notorious Poplar Board of Guardians have reduced the unhappy region where they rule. The exceptional unemployment of the present time perhaps calls for such exceptional measures as additional insurance, special grants, relief works, and accelerated works of public utility. But it is best dealt with by measures intended to revive normal

trade, such as guarantees of loans and export credits. Most important of all, however, are the restoration of peace at home and abroad, the stabilisation of the exchanges, the revival of general prosperity in the world, the return to goodwill among men. The permanent causes of unemployment, which, as we have seen, relate primarily to the falling demand and rising supply of low-grade labour, require very different treatment. They require a vast qualitative improvement in our racial stock, a general advance in education, a considerable readjustment of our economic organisation, and, above all, a stringent cutting off of the flood of impoverished life which threatens not only to swamp our labour markets but to submerge our civilisation itself.

§ 34. *The Problem of Remuneration.*

It is one of the paradoxes of the day that those who profess to speak on behalf of labour, on the one hand clamour for the provision of "work for all," and on the other hand denounce such work as is provided, even when well remunerated, as "wage-slavery." They proclaim the "right to work," and as soon as work is found they urge upon the recipient the duty of not doing it. They incite him to go slow, to malingering, to restrict output, to engage in strikes, to commit acts of sabotage, and in general to treat his employer as a mortal foe, whose interests are opposed to his own, and whom he must injure to the utmost extent of his power. In their perverted vocabulary "industrial activity" is not the doing of honest work and the earning of honourable wages, but the violent stoppage of all production by direct action, and the

effort to starve the community into subjection. Says Mr. G. D. H. Cole, one of the worst exemplars of anti-social and irrational intellectualism: "To do good work for a capitalist employer is merely to help a thief to steal more successfully."¹ Similarly, Mr. W. Mellor of the *Daily Herald*, another errant Oxonian of the same type, contends that "the workers have the right to use every method likely to weaken the power of their employers."² It is this deplorable attitude on the part of self-constituted Labour leaders, together with its unfortunate influence upon the rank and file of the industrial masses, which has (as we have already noted) so seriously aggravated the unemployment problem. It has also made the wages question peculiarly and unnecessarily difficult of settlement.

For the first thing that has to be recognised in any fruitful discussion of the question of remuneration is the truth that production is the result of a partnership in which normally five factors have a place, viz. (1) *Nature*, which provides the site, the raw materials, and the conditions of industry; (2) *Capital*, which supplies the indispensable means of maintenance during the process of production; (3) *Labour*, manual and mental, which contributes the necessary elements of skill and craft; (4) *Management*, to which are due the organisation and directive capacity essential to the effective co-ordination of the other three factors; and finally, (5) *Enterprise*, which is willing and able to assume and to bear the risk of economic adventure. The reward of all those who control each and every one of these five factors has to come out of the

¹ Cole, *Self-Government in Industry*, p. 174.

² Mellor, *Direct Action*, p. 108.

ultimate product of their joint efficiency: there is no other source of remuneration.¹ Sometimes those who control these five factors are five different persons or groups of persons. When that is the case the situation is unsatisfactory; it means that harmonious co-operation is jeopardised. In particular it is regrettable when Capital and Labour are wholly divorced from one another. It is eminently desirable that owners of capital should themselves work at its conversion into new wealth. It is still more desirable that working men should be capitalists, continually saving a portion of their earnings, investing them in industry, and reaping the secure rewards of investment. For the economic weakness of the working man arises from the fact that, as such, he has no reserves. Labour is a perishable commodity, and any one who has nothing but his labour to contribute to production cannot but remain in a position of insecurity. The demand made by the Guild Socialists² that the working man should be placed, like a policeman or a soldier, "on the strength" of his industry, and paid irrespective of what he produces, is an economically and a morally impossible one: it is economically impossible, because what he produces is the sole ultimate source of his remuneration, and if for a time (as recently with the dockers and the miners) he is paid more than he produces the other factors receive less than their fair share and withdraw, so that production wholly ceases; it is morally impossible, because it involves a limitation of number

¹ Cf. Kirkaldy, A. W., *Wealth*, p. 81: "Wages are paid out of what is produced, not out of any pre-existing fund." Also Cox, H., *Economic Liberty*, p. 49: "The workman is ultimately paid, not out of the employer's private purse, but out of the proceeds of the industry."

² Cf. Tawney, *Acquisitive Society*, p. 177, and Cole, *Guild Socialism Restated*, p. 71.

and a coercive discipline such as would be intolerable outside Russia. The actual alternative to "wage-slavery," as the lurid experience of the victims of Bolshevism has shown us, is slavery without the wages.

When it is remembered that wages are paid out of product, the supreme and suicidal folly of restriction of output is evident : the more there is produced, the more there is to divide. When, again, it is realised that the portion of the product which is available for wages is increased in proportion as interest on capital and insurance against risk are diminished, the lunacy of menaces to capital, raids on capital, and capital levies is apparent, as is also the evil effect upon wages of the uncertainty caused by strikes, sabotage, and all the paraphernalia of revolutionary violence. Labour is in a master position to-day to secure unprecedented rewards for its activities, provided only it (1) ceases to quarrel with its partners in production ; (2) ceases to play with revolution ; (3) ceases to restrict its output ; (4) ceases to oppose scientific management and the introduction of improved methods ; (5) ceases to discourage the efforts of its abler and more energetic workers by insisting on flat rates of pay ; and generally (6) ceases to act as a block to industrial progress.

§ 35. *The Problem of Conditions.*

Payment by results is, as we have just seen, in some form or other, essential in industry. Nay, more, it is in the long run inevitable. For if payment on any other basis is made, sooner or later, according to the magnitude of the divagation, industry is

strangled and payment of any and every kind comes to an end.

Wages, however, are not the only consideration in industry. They are necessary, of course, in order to provide the food and the clothing required by the labouring man. But "the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment," and wages, after all, are merely a means to the higher ends of existence. Similarly, employment is not an end in itself: it is on the one hand a means of social service—the best means by which the average man can advance the interests of the community; it is on the other hand a means by which the employee earns subsistence for himself and those dependent upon him, together with such of the amenities of life as are procurable. In short, the demand for employment is really a demand for wages; and the demand for wages is really a demand for the opportunities of self-realisation.

Now, self-realisation requires leisure; for however congenial necessary toil may be, it is mainly in hours of freedom that the body refreshes itself, that the mind expands, and that the spirit grows by contact with its fellows. Hence excessive hours of labour are to be condemned. Nay, more, even from the economic point of view they are a mistake; for after a certain period of time the hand becomes weary and the brain lethargic, so that output diminishes and its quality deteriorates. A famous mathematical coach at Cambridge used to warn his pupils against attempting more than six hours' work a day: $4 + 2$, he said, made 6; but $6 + 2$ were equivalent only to 4.

The problem in each avocation is to find the exact number of hours which result in the highest efficiency and the most economical output. The argument for

the reduction of the miners' day from eight hours to seven was that eight was above the maximum of efficiency and that the reduction of hours would not involve a diminution of output. In that particular case the argument was fallacious: output has fallen, price has risen, industry has been handicapped, and the community severely injured.¹ Nevertheless, although in this particular instance the calculation was erroneous and the results of the error disastrous, the general principle is sound. And there can be no doubt that the amazing recent developments in machinery, together with the discovery of new sources of mechanical power—in particular, electrical motors and internal combustion engines—have rendered it possible most enormously to reduce the hours of labour in many branches of industry. Lord Leverhulme has formulated a scheme which proposes “to use coal at the pit mouth, converting it into coke for the use of steel works, using the gas liberated for making electricity, and extracting from the by-products aniline dyes, medicines, and fertilisers”; he estimates that the adoption of this scheme “would

¹ The following table, showing the diminished output of coal, is damnnatory. It explains not only the depression of the coal trade, but much of the adversity of all industries dependent upon coal.

| Year. | Output per Person per Annum. | Wage-Cost of Output. |
|-------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1888 | 299 tons | £ 52 |
| 1898 | 282 " | 60 |
| 1908 | 248 " | 91 |
| 1918 | 224 " | 197 |

Since 1918 output has further diminished, and wage-cost further increased to some 25s. a ton. In America the wage-cost is about 7s. a ton. How is it possible for British industry to hold its own in the markets of the world?

make unnecessary at least half of the labour of the United Kingdom."

Why should we view with dismay so vast an economy in human toil, so enormous an increase in potential leisure? Simply because it would temporarily involve so serious a dislocation of the labour market. It would at the moment of its adoption throw millions out of work, depriving them of their wages and imperilling their standards of life. How would adjustment to the new conditions be brought about? In two ways. On the one hand, the immense fall in the cost of commodities would enable the whole community to live comfortably with less exertion and at reduced rates of pay. On the other hand, enfranchised labour would seek new outlets in ministering to the higher wants of man. For the dominating economic fact of the situation is that the wants of man are limitless. No individual ever has or can have all that he desires. There is no such thing as general over-production. As soon as one want is satisfied, another makes its insistence felt. If only prices were lower, which of us would not have country cottages, gardens, motor cars, books, pictures, instruments of music, things of beauty and delight of all sorts? Which of us would not travel more, go oftener to the concert and the theatre, live a larger and more varied life? When skill and toil are no longer required as they are now to supply the primary material needs of man, they will be free to supply his spiritual and aesthetic demands. It is quite conceivable that means of production of food and clothing will be made so perfect and so automatic that it will be possible for the community to distribute to all its members (provided their numbers are kept down) free of charge all

that is essential to mere life. If that should ever be feasible, the energies of the whole community could largely be devoted to the things that make life really worth living.

But the arresting question obtrudes itself: What of the unskilled labourer in this scheme of scientific industry? What of the masses of the mentally, morally, and physically defective who are incapable of rendering any sort of higher service? What of the proletariat which is able to provide nothing except more of itself? Every dream of the perfectibility of man, or of the idealisation of human society, is exposed to a rude awakening when the "population problem" presents itself. Unless the excessive breeding of the economically unfit can be prevented, there is no hope for the permanent betterment of the race.

§ 36. *The Problem of Control.*

Not merely are the wages of industry and the hours of labour matters of vital concern to the working man; he is not less profoundly interested in the environment amid which he labours and lives—in the place whereat he toils, the house wherein he dwells, the method of control whereto he is subject. He feels, quite naturally, that he should have some voice in determining the circumstances which play so large a part in making or in marring his career. He regards it as anomalous that he should share a political sovereignty which administers one-fifth part of the globe, and at the same time should undergo an economic subjection which allows him no self-government at all. Hence the problem: How far is self-government in industry possible and reasonable?

We have already noted¹ that even in the political sphere democracy is possible only when certain conditions exist. Among these conditions the most important are (*a*) external security and (*b*) internal harmony. If a community is threatened by conquest from without, it must place the supreme control of its affairs in the hands of a military dictator or a war cabinet. If, again, a community is torn by civil dissension some form of authoritarian rule is inevitable; because in the circumstances no public opinion, no social conscience, and no general will can be formed.

We must now observe, further, that even when these two essential pre-requisites of democracy are present in sufficient fulness to allow a system of self-government to be established, yet in so far as elements of external peril or internal disunion remain, it is needful to keep up within the democracy authoritarian organisations to deal with them. The possibility of foreign attack necessitates the maintenance of an army and a navy, and within these organisations the strictest discipline is inevitable. Similarly, the presence within the community of anti-social elements—criminals, lunatics, anarchists, and communists—necessitates the maintenance of a police force, and here again authoritarian control is vital. Lord Macaulay in his history of Argyll's rebellion gave a lurid illustration of the fate of an army which was led by a debating society. We ourselves have recently seen the condition of a police force organised as a trade union and affiliated to the Labour Party.

Now, what is the condition of British industry at the present day? Is it in a state of unchallenged supremacy abroad, or of undisturbed harmony at

¹ Chap. II. § 11.

home? To ask the question is enough! On the one hand, Britain, which depends for three-fourths of the very necessities of existence upon her foreign commerce, finds her long-established security in foreign markets challenged by powerful rivals whose efficiency is superior to her own. "We have been turned from a creditor to a debtor nation," says Mr. G. A. Greenwood; "we have lost the old commercial supremacy to the United States."¹ Yes! and we have lost it to no small extent because of the obscurantist policy of Labour and its incessant interferences with management. Whatever may be the case in the few industries where foreign competition is negligible, certainly in those where it is the great determining factor any attempt at democratic control means speedy and irremediable disaster. On the other hand, instead of the harmony and goodwill which are essential for the efficient working of any sort of democratic organisation, we find industry torn by suicidal conflicts. Labour leaders in their milder moods, and when they are trying to influence Parliament or the electorate, profess that all they ask for is a "share in control," and that what they most desire is an opportunity to benefit the public by increasing efficiency, fostering economy, and keeping peace!² Well comments Professor E. V. Arnold: "Though he [a well-known Labour leader] may talk smoothly of men desiring to contribute ideas and share control, he knows well enough that the Unions are pledged to refuse all agreements with capital, and that they demand unconditional supremacy."³ The

¹ Greenwood, *England To-day*, p. 122.

² Cf. *What we Want and Why*, *passim*, and especially pp. 180-191.

³ Arnold, *Nationalisation of Mines*, p. 5.

correctness of this opinion is confirmed by the utterances of thousands of these same two-voiced Labour leaders in their more expansive and less prudent moods. For instance: "Our objective," say the authors of *The Miners' Next Step*, "begins to take shape before your eyes: every industry thoroughly organised in the first place to fight, to gain control of, and then to administer that industry." The same idea underlies Mr. J. M. Paton's scheme of "encroaching control"; it "consists essentially in the gradual pushing out of the employer from the control of industry, through aggressive trade-union action."¹ Mr. J. H. Harley defines a trade union as "an association of workmen organised with a view to war."² Mr. G. D. H. Cole asserts that "the first purpose of trade unions is to fight the employers," and adds that "any other activities in which they engage should always be regarded as secondary and in comparison unimportant."³ When, therefore, in another place Mr. Cole (whom those unambiguous Communists Eden and Cedar Paul unkindly but appropriately call "Mr. Facing-both-Ways") meekly begs for the admission of trade unions to "a definite place in the control of industry,"⁴ he sounds like a decoy treacherously advising a beleaguered garrison to admit into their citadel the hosts of their most deadly foes. For, as says Mr. C. M. Lloyd, "we may take it as the settled view of modern trade unionism that its proper function is to wage steady war on capitalism."⁵ Similarly Mr. W. Mellor: "We believe that the object of trade unionism is to transplant capitalism.

¹ Carpenter, N., *Guild Socialism*, p. 99.

² Harley, *Syndicalism*, p. 74.

³ Cole, *World of Labour*, p. 259.

⁴ Cole, *Social Theory*, p. 79.

⁵ Lloyd, *Trade Unionism*, p. 78.

We are revolutionary, and our analysis of society leads us to believe that in the class war all weapons are justifiable.”¹ Hence, presumably, it would be justifiable for Labour to ask for a “share of control” under a pretence that it wished to aid in efficiency, economy, and peace, and then, having secured what it asked for, to use its position and power to expropriate the employers and appropriate their capital.

Is it to be wondered at that employers hesitate to admit organised Labour to a share in control? “How can a tiger and its victim form a community?” pertinently asks Mr. Ramsay MacDonald.² But if organised Labour were to succeed in its purpose of capturing industry, expelling the capitalists, and assuming complete command, could it carry on? Mr. B. W. Faraday in his *Democracy and Capital* answers the question thus (p. 278): “Control by Labour would reduce industry to chaos. There would be no management capable of managing a wheel stall. The accumulated capital would disappear in uneconomic wages, and at the end of a short period the business would be bankrupt and the men homeless.” This answer, however, must not be too hastily accepted. It opens up further questions which must be dealt with in a new chapter.

¹ Mellor, quoted in *Industrial Peace*, January 1920.

² MacDonald, *Syndicalism*, p. 10.

CHAPTER VII

THE POLICY OF LABOUR

"If these were my last words to my fellow unionists, I would say to them : Do not sacrifice all the benefits of Trade Unions by turning them into miscellaneous clubs for political agitation."—MR. FREDERIC HARRISON.

"It is not too much to say that the proposals of the Labour Party display a reckless irresponsibility in dealing with matters of grave moment which is nothing less than deplorable."—PROFESSOR RAMSAY MUIR.

"That which is known as 'Labour' to-day has taken up an attitude hopelessly at variance with the real national prosperity. Its programme is based on false arguments, distorted facts, and bitter prejudice."—MR. W. B. FARADAY.

"The modern Labour movement is becoming one of the most intolerant of organisations ever known, and there is little room in it for the man who desires freedom to think and act according to his courage and his convictions, We are being Prussianised by it."—MR. G. H. ROBERTS (late Labour M.P.).

"If by some mistake the rival leaders of labour ever found themselves together in Heaven, they would soon turn it into Hell."—MR. SEAW DESMOND.

"The object of all organisation among the workers is to be able to stop production."—MR. W. MELLOR (of the *Daily Herald*).

§ 37. *Labour's Trade Union Policy.*

It is obviously impossible that organised labour should be willingly admitted to any "share of control" in industry so long as it remains a matter of such grave uncertainty why it wishes to gain an entrance. If the objects of trade unions were to-day

what they professed themselves to be in 1871, *i.e.* if the unions existed "to promote a good understanding between employers and employed, the better regulation of their relations, and the settlement of disputes between them by arbitration," then it would be not only possible but from all points of view desirable that a real and equitable partnership should be established. Not only would labour be able to make useful contributions to the causes of efficiency, economy, and peace; it would be able also to have an effective voice in the determination of wages, hours, and conditions of work. But, as we have seen, the great trade union movement has been captured by alien politicians—by Socialists, Syndicalists, and Anarchists—and has been diverted from the way of peace into the way of war. "The working class and the employing class," teaches the Central Labour College and its revolutionary organs, "have nothing in common. Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organise as a class, take possession of the earth and the machinery of production, and abolish the wage system." This principle is pointed by Mr. W. Gallacher, the notorious Glasgow Labour leader, who says in *The Worker*: "The trade unions, bad as they are, are the only organisations the workers have for carrying on the incessant struggle against capitalism."

We are told of the woe which waits for those who cry "Peace! peace!" when there is no peace. How immeasurably deeper is the condemnation which should be reserved for those who cry "War! war!" when there is no war. This lamentable perversion of the trade unions from instruments of collective bargaining to engines of destruction, and from friendly

societies to aggressive armies, is one of the chief causes of our present-day troubles. It has frustrated all attempts at post-war resettlement and reconstruction. In 1920—the year when distress began to be acute—there were no less than 1715 strikes, involving nearly two millions of work-people, and causing the loss of over twenty-seven million working days. One of these strikes alone—the coal strike of the autumn—resulted in the loss to the community of 13,000,000 tons of coal, and to the miners of £14,000,000 of wages. What wonder that destitution and unemployment are rampant!

Yet, if only the trade unions could be rescued from their militant perverters and restored to the way of co-operation and peace, what infinite possibilities lie before them! First, as we have already noted, they could secure effective control of all matters relating to wages, hours, and conditions of labour. Secondly, they could act as the agents both of the State and the employers in all that concerns insurances, pensions, and reliefs. Thirdly, they could vastly increase industrial efficiency by encouraging and supervising the technical education of their members: hitherto they have done disgracefully little to aid production; all their so-called “trade customs” have been restrictive and obstructive. Fourthly—and this is the vital matter—they might start industries of their own. When I hear all this clamour about “self-government in industry” and “share of control,” I ask: Why on earth does not Labour set up its own concerns? It has vast funds of capital—or had them until it squandered them in futile and disastrous strikes—and it can easily get more. “At the beginning of the twentieth century,” we are told, “the

wage-earning classes owned a collective capital of one thousand million pounds." It is estimated that the money wasted—and far worse than wasted—by the Miners' Federation in the deplorable three months' coal war of 1921 would have purchased outright one-fifth of the mines in the United Kingdom. Why was not the money so used? In short, the great trade unions could in a very few years, by the ordinary processes of saving and investment, procure a controlling interest in all the industries of the country. Nothing could be more legitimate than that by this means they should do so. When, therefore, I hear Labour ventriloquists crying for emancipation from "wage-slavery," and groaning for freedom, I am reminded of the prisoner immortalised by Mark Twain. There was once a man, he tells us, who spent twenty years in a loathsome dungeon: at length a happy thought struck him—he opened a window and got out!

The idea that trade unions should run their own concerns was mooted by the Christian Socialists three-quarters of a century ago: "Let them," wrote Ludlow, "organise their labour on an associative basis, use their funds in order to develop self-governing factories, and so show the masters that a great trade can produce the fruit of its own craft without their aid, and as free fellow-workers together."¹ More recently, Mr. J. H. Bunting, from the trade union point of view, has presented a powerful plea for "the outflanking of the power of capital" by the same admirable and constitutional means.² Mr. Stirling Taylor, the prominent Guild Socialist, admits

¹ Raven, C. E., *Christian Socialism*, p. 247.

² Bunting, J. H., *Is Trade Unionism Sound?* especially pp. 66-67.

that "a few shillings per head from the working class would quickly raise the capital necessary to make a trial of democratic management in any industry."¹ Finally, Dean Inge pointedly remarks: "The trade unions might easily put their theories into practice if they wished. They could start co-operative production without paying any toll to 'functionless' capital."² Why don't they do so?

§ 38. *Labour's Industrial Policy.*

One reason why Socialists prefer to formulate schemes for appropriating the successful enterprises of other people, rather than to start enterprises of their own, will be evident to any one who reads the humiliating story of the universal failure of all the co-operative undertakings fostered by the Christian Socialists in the middle of the nineteenth century. The story is admirably told in the sympathetic pages of Dr. C. E. Raven's notable book.³ The causes of the general collapse are frankly admitted to have been (1) lack of business capacity, especially in the spheres of organisation and publicity; (2) unwillingness to allow adequate rewards for enterprise and ability; (3) slackness and inattention; (4) indiscipline; (5) quarrels, dissensions, and schisms; (6) greed, jealousy, selfishness, and downright dishonesty. "The scheme," concludes Dr. Raven, "made too great a demand on the moral qualities of the human material upon whose efforts and power of corporate life its success depended."⁴ The experience of the Christian

¹ Stirling Taylor, quoted Withers, *Case for Capitalism*, p. 110.

² *Edinburgh Review*, July 1921, p. 34.

³ Raven, *Christian Socialism*, especially chap. x.

⁴ *Op. cit.* p. 335.

Socialists has been repeated and confirmed by numerous subsequent experiments of Socialists of all sorts, Christian and anti-Christian—in particular, very recently and very remarkably, by those of the Guild Socialists.¹

How is it that Capitalism can “deliver the goods” and that Socialism cannot? It certainly is not because in the ranks of working men there is any lack of individual ability. That is far from being the case. On the contrary, there are, and always have been, in the artisan and labouring class men of outstanding capacity and genius well qualified to lead and command in any industrial or commercial adventure. Most of our great and successful businesses, indeed, have been founded and built up by such men. I think that I am right in saying that every one of the leading firms in the Potteries was established by a man who began his career as a lowly worker at the wheel. Capitalism gave them their opportunity; private enterprise enabled them to take advantage of it; competition spurred them to efficiency; success in serving the public gave them their reward. If it be replied: “Oh! but they ‘produced for profit and not for service,’” I venture to say that a more ridiculous catchword has not recently been invented. Under a free Capitalist system no profit can continue to be made except in return for service. Unserviceable fraud, of course, can, and too often does, snatch a momentary advantage; just as burglars make an occasional haul. But only by the honest satisfying of some common demand can any man continue to

¹ Mr. W. H. Mallock gives an account of the dismal failure of some eighty Socialist ventures in his *Limits of Pure Democracy*. The failures of the Guild Socialists have now to be added to these.

amass wealth. If in return for great service—as, for example, the production of a cheap motor car or a popular wireless installation—a man succeeds in making a large fortune, it is for the community to feel thankful and to congratulate him, and not (with the Socialists) in malignant jealousy to accuse him of robbery and to devise schemes for depriving him of his fortune and for deterring any one like him from making a similar fortune. How far better it is frankly to work for a profit, recognising that it can be honestly and permanently secured only by rendering public service, than it is to profess to work “for service and not for profit,” and to manifest that exalted principle by constant strikes for higher wages and shorter hours, by persistent “ca’ canny” and restriction of output, and by every device calculated to secure sectional advantage at public expense!

The industrial policy of the Socialist mis-leaders of Labour is, in short, all wrong. It tends to damp down enterprise, to discourage ability, to stop invention and adventure, to penalise thrift, and to rob service of its legitimate reward. It is impossible to calculate the damage that has already been done to the British people as a whole, and to the working classes in particular, by the insane attacks which have been lately made upon successful industries, and by the still more formidable menaces foreshadowed if or when “Labour rules,” *i.e.* if or when the Socialists capture the State, as they have captured the Trade Unions.¹

¹ The closing down of Brinsmead’s at Kentish Town, the winding up of Cole’s at Hammersmith, and the removal of Yarrow’s from the Clyde to Vancouver are only three out of many recent examples of the results of the suicidal policy which Socialist Labour has adopted.

§ 39. *Labour's Financial Policy.*

The financial policy of the Socialist Labour Party, as set forth in its manifesto of 1922, is as follows : (1) A capital levy to produce £3,000,000,000 ; (2) The exemption from direct taxation of all incomes less than £250 ; (3) The reduction of the direct taxation on incomes between £250 and £500 ; (4) The abandonment of all indirect taxation ; (5) Increased taxation on larger incomes ; (6) Increased Death Duties. On the side of expenditure, economies are to be effected in Army, Navy, and Air Force ; while large funds are to be provided for unemployed benefit, old age pensions, endowment of motherhood, housing, and education.

In contemplating this programme it is difficult to say which is its more conspicuous feature, its iniquity or its folly. Its gross iniquity consists in the fact that it proposes to place almost the whole burden of the State upon the shoulders of the minority who have over £500 a year income. As Mr. Ramsay Muir well says : " It would set up a privileged majority of 8,000,000 families who would determine the policy of the State, but would feel no financial responsibility for this policy, since the whole cost would be imposed upon a politically impotent minority of 2,000,000 families. This would destroy freedom for the minority, while for the majority it would viciously divorce freedom from its essential correlative responsibility." ¹ It is, indeed, a flagrant and scandalous appeal to the predatory passions of the proletariat : it promises them by legal means an immoral orgy of plunder. The ideologues of the Labour Party who try to defend

¹ Muir, *Politics and Progress*, p. 75.

this outrage do so on the oft-exposed and entirely devastated Marxian ground that the proletariat produces more than it gets ; that it is an exploited class ; that the surplus value of the fruits of its industry is wrongfully seized by the functionless and conscienceless rich. Says Mr. Philip Snowden, for instance : " A Labour Government would pursue a financial policy aimed at diverting for social purposes that part of the national product which is now appropriated by the idle classes," and, with the money so obtained, " would raise the standard of life of the workers who are now poor because so large a part of what they earn goes to maintain a parasitic class." ¹ Not even Mr. Snowden's disinterested zeal on behalf of the incompetent and the unfit can excuse so glaring a misrepresentation of fact, or so unblushing a repetition of a long-exploded fallacy. It is the proletariat who are parasitic, battenning on an industry which they are powerless to assist, but potent to destroy. " Labour," truly says Mr. Hartley Withers, " gets the whole of its product and a great deal more." ² The problem of unemployment, indeed, is, as we have seen, largely the problem of how to find a place in the new world of industrial science and technical invention for the proletarian survivors of the Stone Age, who have nothing to contribute to production beyond what the Cave Men had. To talk of their being the " producers " of modern wealth, or of their helping to " maintain a parasitic class "—even their own—is a gross abuse of language.

The iniquity of the Labour Party's financial policy—its proposal to tax the capable and the thrifty in

¹ Snowden, *If Labour Rules*, pp. 33-133.

² Withers, *Case for Capitalism*, p. 109.

order to subsidise a pauper proletariat—is, however, paralleled and even exceeded by its folly. Capital is the very life-blood of industry. Plentiful capital means countless new ventures and boundless fresh possibilities of profitable employment. Secure capital encourages general saving and rapid increase of fruitful wealth. Cheap capital involves low rates of interest and consequently high rates of wages. Any sane Labour policy would be directed to encourage thrift, to stimulate investment, to foster private enterprise, to make commercial adventure attractive, to secure the largest possible stores of capital available for industrial purposes. Instead of that, the policy of the Socialist Party—with its menace of enhanced Income Tax, aggravated Death Duties, and, to crown all, monstrous Capital Levy—is nicely calculated to destroy confidence, discourage saving, stimulate extravagant expenditure, make capital scarce and shy, enhance bank rates, lower wages, increase unemployment, and deepen destitution. Who will save and invest if he is constantly confronted with the spectre of spoliation? Let us eat and drink, will be the motto of the men with money, for to-morrow the Labour Party may be in power!¹

§ 40. *Labour's Domestic Policy.*

The Socialist Party, as we have just seen, if ever it comes into power, intends to use its control of national finance, not in order to carry on the ordinary and necessary business of the State, but in order to effect

¹ Mr. Ramsay Muir not unjustly charges the Labour Party in its financial programme of being “carried away by a mere blind desire to mulct the capitalist without considering consequences.”—*Politics and Progress*, p. 125.

a redistribution of wealth in accordance with its own ideas of what is desirable. It has a vast and expensive scheme of so-called "Social Reform." This scheme is its chief asset—the main source of its strength—both politically and morally. Politically it appeals powerfully to the proletarian voter: it promises him something for nothing; it holds out hopes of a paradise to be provided out of other people's pockets. Morally it appeals with almost equal force to the large class of bourgeois philanthropists whose hearts are more highly developed than their heads: it promises a remedy for the intolerable evils which exist on every side; it holds out a hope of a new social order.

The promises which Socialism makes are vain: the hopes which it holds out are delusive. Its diagnosis of the diseases of the body politic is a mistaken diagnosis: the remedies which it proposes are quack remedies. It enormously overestimates environment as a cause of social evils; it regards the sores of humanity as mere skin troubles; it applies ointments, salves, liniments, and other merely cutaneous palliatives which in the end immensely aggravate the ills they were intended to cure. In 1909, for instance, when the Labour Party was out for "the break-up of the Poor Law," Mrs. Sidney Webb, the leading exponent of the party's policy, deliberately and repeatedly stated that there were five and only five roads to destitution, and that all that was required in order to realise the better world was to stop them up with public money. These five roads were: (1) Neglected infancy and childhood; (2) neglected sickness; (3) neglected feeble-mindedness; (4) neglected old-age; (5) unemployment. Not a single cause which in-

volved any moral defect in a pauper ; not a single cause which he himself could have prevented by energy or foresight ; not a single cause which does not depict him as the mere victim of circumstances ! Could any diagnosis be more false ? Could any false diagnosis have a more deplorable effect in causing a pauper to settle down to moral complacency, abandon effort, and demand that the community which had created him should support him ? There are, however, other “ roads to destitution ” which Socialists in general, and Mrs. Sidney Webb in particular, ignore, and among them are : (1) Ignorance due to laziness and neglected educational opportunities ; (2) incompetence due to slackness and deficiency in a sense of public duty ; (3) improvidence due to lack of foresight and self-restraint ; (4) immorality, and especially the awful trinity of evil—drinking, gambling, and sexual vice—which are responsible for incalculable masses of degradation and pauperism ; and (5) increase, that is to say, the reckless over-breeding of the proletariat which continually pours into the congested cesspools of the slums a torrent of impoverished and corrupted life. These alone, and particularly the last two, account for a large part of the destitution in the country. You may stop up all the five roads charted and recognised by the Socialists and you will still find your pauper battalions crowding in. As well try to stop a plague by barricades as attempt to remedy the effects of drink, gambling, and vice by “ breaking up the Poor Law.” As well try to stem a deluge with a sponge as attempt to absorb the destitute by means of benevolent institutions while the new myriads of the unfit pour in at the rate of hundreds a day.

If it be contended that it is the slums which cause both vice and reckless breeding, I reply that this is a half-truth which is worse than a total error. Environment, it is true, reacts upon nature; but nature is the first mover. It is the characteristic of man to make his own environment; and the slum is the creation of ignorance, incompetence, improvidence, immorality, and reckless increase, rather than their creator.

The weakness of Labour policy in respect of social problems is its superficiality and its lack of idealism: it sees only surface causes, and it suggests only material remedies. It fails to recognise the fact that the root causes of the ills of the body politic are individual sin and folly; and it refuses to admit the truth that the only effective cures are moral and religious regeneration, mental discipline, and racial purification.

§ 41. *Labour's Imperial Policy.*

The lack of imagination and insight displayed by the Socialist Labour Party in respect of the domestic problems with which it is primarily concerned is manifested in an even more glaring and conspicuous manner in respect of the problems of the British Empire, concerning which it is comparatively careless. Lord Milner in his exceptionally gentle handling of this tetchy party—whose violence of language is exceeded only by its resentment of plain speaking on the side of its critics—comments upon the “strange anti-British and anti-patriotic bias” of those men “who inspire the policy of Labour to-day,” and he ventures to rebuke them for their “indifference, not

to say hostility, to the Empire.”¹ Analysing the causes of this curious callousness and antipathy, he attributes it to (1) ignorance and (2) prejudice. This ignorance nowadays is quite inexcusable, for countless sources of information are readily available. The records of the making of the British Empire tell, in the main, a fascinating and glorious story, not of conquest or exploitation, but of the building up of a great commonwealth of free nations and prosperous protectorates by means of the individual enterprise and political genius of the British peoples. It is a story of which every Briton ought to be proud ; it is one which should fill him with hope for the future of humanity. For the best prospect of the ordered progress of mankind is to be found in the growing influence of the British Empire, in the development of its resources, and in the prevalence of the principles for which it stands. Hence if the normal Labour ignorance of the Empire is lamentable, still more deplorable is the prejudice which it manifests against the Empire. Everywhere and on all occasions Labour seems to prefer the Red Flag—emblem of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness ; standard of disruptive animosities and sanguinary class war—to the Union Jack, symbol of peace, justice, prosperity, and advancing self-government. From “ Empire Day ” celebrations—intended to spread knowledge of the constituent peoples of the great confederation, to quicken interest, to foster union, and to deepen responsibility—Labour, as a rule, holds sullenly or angrily aloof.

Nay, worse than this, the leaders of the Labour Party in vehement words denounce the Empire, and

¹ Milner, *Questions of the Hour*, pp. 94, 103.

by obstructive deeds impede its progress. Take emigration, for example. Nothing could be more beneficial to both the Overseas Dominions and the Mother Country ; it would aid the development of the one and would relieve the congestion of the other. Yet Labour leaders—who on other occasions ridicule the family as an obsolete and bourgeois institution—object to it on the ground that it would break up the home ! Again : if anywhere in the Empire a subversive conspiracy is formed, or a disruptive movement begins, or a violent rebellion arises, the conspirators, destroyers, and rebels know that they can implicitly rely on having the countenance and eloquent support of the spokesmen of Socialist Labour. If Irish Sinn Feiners harry Southern Loyalists, blow up their houses, drive off their cattle, devastate their farms, and ultimately exterminate them by unauthorised murder, Labour sends to these sanguinary criminals sympathetic deputations who join them in lamentations at their lack of liberty, and in hopes for their speedy emancipation from English tyranny ! If in India, under the name of “ nationalism,” an agitation begins for the purpose of supplanting the beneficent British administration, and substituting the tyranny of a Brahminical oligarchy, Labour (which repudiates the very principle of nationality in Europe) takes up the cause of the agitators with enthusiasm. Mr. George Lansbury, for instance, blesses the policy of non-co-operation ; Mr. Ben Spoor listens without protest to the advocacy by Indian extremists of a complete boycott of British goods ; Colonel Wedgwood approves of the complete separation of India from the Empire. Similarly, in Egypt, while it was under British protection, the

disastrous machination of Zaghlul Pasha had the whole-hearted approval of the Labour oligarchs ; in recognition of which valued approval the grateful Zaghlul poured Egyptian money into the bottomless coffers of the *Daily Herald*.

It is needless to pile up instances. Everywhere the story is the same. In the eyes of Socialist Labour Britain can do nothing right, while the enemies of Britain can do nothing wrong. Few things, indeed, more strikingly demonstrate the total unfitness of Labour to govern than its hopeless perversity respecting all the problems of Empire.

§ 42. *Labour's Foreign Policy.*

The anti-British perversity which characterises Labour's imperial policy is equally clearly evident in its foreign policy—if, indeed, it can be said to have a foreign policy at all. On this point opinions differ. Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb hold one view: "In questions of foreign policy," they say, "the Labour Party, inspired by its idealism, has shown itself at its best."¹ This, after all, is only a relative recommendation. To the present writer it means, absolutely, nothing. But they intend it to be praise. Other, and less biassed, observers use expressions which are *not* intended to be praise. The Rev. G. A. Studdert-Kennedy—known to the world as "Woodbine Willie"—an exponent of that contradiction in terms, "Christian Socialism," and a man very well disposed to Socialism of all types, says to Organised Labour, twice over, "You do not seem to have any really constructive foreign policy at all. . . . In fact, you

¹ Webb, *History of Trade Unionism*, p. 696 note.

don't seem to me to have any definitely constructive foreign policy whatever."¹ "What I say three times is true," insisted Alice. If Alice had been ordained she perhaps would have reduced that number by one. Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, however, does not entirely concur with Mr. Kennedy's iterated opinion. He thinks that Labour *has* a foreign policy, but one of which he cannot approve: it is at its worst, he says, a subversive and anti-patriotic cosmopolitanism, at its best "merely an effusion of muddled, balmy amiability."²

Mr. Jones is right. Labour—that is to say, the group of Socialist ventriloquists who do its talking—has a foreign policy of a sort. But it is a policy of empty phrases, vague generalities, nebulous emotions; a policy wholly divorced from knowledge and utterly out of touch with realities. Its dominant characteristics are, first, its anti-patriotic bias; second, its doctrinaire impossibility; and third, its cosmopolitan sentimentality.

Its anti-patriotic bias is conspicuous. It professes to repudiate patriotism and to regard it as merely a "vulgar vice." But it carries its repudiation too far: by instinctively and unvaryingly treating its own country as always in the wrong, it becomes itself a champion of the patriotism of its country's enemies. Similarly, it professes to reject the principle of nationality, and it refuses to obey any call to duty or sacrifice made in the name of Britain. But once again it overreaches itself. For if it repudiates British nationality, with all its obligations and its glories, it all too eager endorses and supports any anti-British nationality,

¹ Kennedy, *Democracy and the Dog Collar*, pp. 213, 235.

² Jones, *Patriotism and Popular Education*, p. 151.

notably of Irish, Indians, and Egyptians, but also of Germans, Russians, and Turks.

Its doctrinaire impossibility is evident in its slavery to catchwords. "*No secret diplomacy*," it cries, without asking how diplomacy could be carried on except in confidential conversations and by means of inviolate correspondence; and without reflecting that the intrigues of the Labour Party itself, the strike-conspiracies of the Trade Union Executives, and the machinations of the Council of Action are all conducted with a privacy and a duplicity compared with which even Balkan diplomacy is open and above-board. "*Self-determination*" it proclaims as a universal principle, without inquiring whether all peoples are fitted to enjoy it; without protesting when the dictators of Russia flagrantly violate it; and apparently without realising that in the tyranny which it has itself established over the Trade Unions—by means of manipulated ballots and terrorist picketing—it is among its most persistent foes. "*No more wars*," it announces, and then labours to precipitate that most horrible and sanguinary of all conflicts, the Class War. "*No more private traffic in armaments*," it urges, and then proceeds to arm the proletariat, to seduce the army and the navy, and to seek to secure control of all the sources of supply and means of transport in the country in order to achieve victory in the Social Revolution, on the great day—*Der Tag*—of the Class War. "*A League of Peoples*" it appeals for, repudiating both the existing League of Nations and that living and potent Confederation of Free Peoples, the British Empire. It is hopeless in its obsessions and perversions.

Its cosmopolitan sentimentalism is merely typical

of the International Socialism by which it is dominated. To the study of this it is now time to turn. The following quotation from that remarkable anonymous work, *The Pomp of Power*, may fittingly conclude this section: "The day will not soon come in England when a majority of the country will consent to foreign policy being controlled by any hybrid internationalism—by a Congress at Berne or Amsterdam, any more than by dictators coming from Moscow. That is a taint of which the Labour Party will have to purge itself before it achieves power."¹

¹ *The Pomp of Power*, p. 226.

PART III

THE FALSE LIGHTS OF DEMOCRACY
AND LABOUR

“What a variety of contradictory theories which are all apparently sound! I begin to suspect that there is a great difference between reasoning and reason.”—DISRAELI'S *Vivian Grey*.

“The abstract politician is busy among us to-day. He moves blindly amid facts that he does not see, and men whom he cannot control.”—SIR THOMAS RALEIGH.

“Our intelligentsia impatiently turn aside from the recorded and ordered progress of our long commercial and industrial prosperity, and present to us as the last word of the new economic vision the notions that deluded and ruined the gaping audiences of John Ball and Wat Tyler in the Middle Ages.”—MR. P. E. ROBERTS.

“The road to ruin for an ignorant and selfish democracy is far shorter than for any other kind of misgovernment: the fall is greater and the ruin more complete.”—SIR HENRY JONES.

“Bolshevism is only Socialism with the courage of its convictions.”
—MR. ROBERT WILLIAMS.

I.L.P. Question: “In what respect does the Third International consider that Communism differs from other forms of Socialism?”

Bolshevik Answer: “There are no other forms; there is only Communism.”

CHAPTER VIII

SOCIALISM

"Really nowadays such a lot of things get called Socialism that the word has lost all the discriminative force one values so much in nouns substantive."—Mr. WILLIAM DE MORGAN in *Somehow Good*.

"Socialism has as many heads as a hydra, and while you are engaged in cutting off one, another springs up in its place."—Father BAMPTON, S.J.

"Socialism set out to be an idealist movement, but it has become wholly materialist; and instead of uniting and uplifting, it divides and lowers."—*Times Literary Supplement*, December 15, 1921.

"The force which gives vitality to Socialistic doctrine is the primitive instinct of predatory self-interest."—Sir ARTHUR CLAY.

"The real ethics of Socialism are the ethics of war."—Mr. HAROLD COX.

"The most striking feature of the political scene is the intellectual exhaustion of Socialism. Thanks to free speech and a free press, it is talking itself out."—Mr. NOEL SKELTON.

§ 43. *The Meaning of Socialism.*

THE "Labour" whose policy has been discussed in the preceding chapter is of course not Labour in the sense of the British working man, or even Labour in the sense of the organised trade unions, but Labour in the sense of Socialism. We have already seen¹ how Socialism has captured the Labour Party and all its machinery. "The supreme object of the Labour Party," ran the resolution passed at the

¹ Above, Chapter V. § 28.

Party's Conference held on June 29, 1923, "should be the suppression of Capitalism by the Socialist Commonwealth." But Socialism has *not* captured the British working man, as his vote at Parliamentary elections, where he is free from terrorism, abundantly shows. That careful American observer Mr. B. G. de Montgomery, commenting upon this fact, says: "The Socialist influence upon the British Labour movement is largely of foreign origin, and Socialist ideas do not seem to have been ever really popular among the British working classes."¹ The British working classes, as a whole, are too sober, too sensible, too honest, too kindly, too conservative, too independent, to be attracted and deluded by the seductive but evil principles of Socialism. The people who *are* attracted belong to the two broad classes of cranks and criminals. They form a powerful combination: the one supplies the innocence, the other the unscrupulous ability necessary for success in revolutionary politics. The first are drawn mainly from the middle-class *intelligenza*—people possessing brains without balance, intellect without common sense—academic, journalistic, clerical; disappointed, disgruntled, and generally very young. The second consists largely of foreign immigrants—Russians, Poles, Austrians, Germans, Italians, and, above all, Jews. Any one who has seen the May Day procession which annually wends its dejected way along the Thames Embankment towards Hyde Park, may be pardoned if he supposes that he is beholding the tail end of the Lost Ten Tribes drawing near to the termination of its weary pilgrimage to Oblivion.

¹ Montgomery, *British and Continental Labour Policy*, p. 164.

Not only are the working classes as a whole free from the taint of Socialism, but even the trade unions, if they could but make the real sentiments of their silent majorities effective, would be found on the side of liberty and common sense. "It is not the trade unions which make the programme and direct the policy of the Labour Party": such is the ingenuous confession of Mr. Philip Snowden.¹ This is true. It is the Socialists who "make the programme and direct the policy" of the Party; the trade unions merely pay for it. When one reflects that of the members of the Labour Party—who in 1922 were numbered at 4,010,361—all but a few thousands were those who have affiliated through trade unions; and when one remembers that all save a negligible fraction of the funds of the Party are raised by trade union levies, one is surprised by the frankness of Mr. Snowden's avowal. The trade unions pay the piper; Socialism calls the tune. It is time to ask, then, What is Socialism?

"Socialism"—a term invented about a hundred years ago—is a word of protean meanings. When it has been caught and scotched in one sense, it reappears in another. Even its votaries cannot agree as to what it is. Some of them, for example, say that it is neither more nor less than "applied Christianity."² Others assert with Karl Marx that "the idea of God is the keystone of a perverted civilisation," and that "it must be destroyed"; or with August Bebel that "Christianity and Socialism stand towards each other as fire and water"; or with the German *Sozial*

¹ Snowden, *If Labour Rules*, p. 15

² H. J. Massingham in *Spectator*, July 1923. Cf. G. W. Currie, *Growth of Socialist Opinion*, p. 6.

Demokrat that "Christianity is the greatest enemy of Socialism." In spite, however, of irreconcilable conflicting opinion among Socialists upon this and many other points, it seems possible to say that the five essential features of Socialism are (1) the elevation of the community above the individual; (2) the eradication of competition; (3) the extinction of private enterprise; (4) the elimination of the capitalist; and (5) the expropriation of the landlord. The first of these five essentials is political; the remaining four are economic. Hence Professor Rudolf Eucken is in substantial agreement with this analysis when he says that the essence of Socialism consists in (a) "the unqualified submission of individuals to the social collectivity," and (b) "the treatment of the economic task as the chief business of life."¹ He commends Socialism for its apparent desire to unify communal life; but unhesitatingly condemns it because of its lack of real unifying power, and because of its materialism. "Its work," he says, "has no spiritual background. Everything it does affects only a limited surface of life."²

§ 44. *The Sources of Socialism.*

Of the five essentials of Socialism noted above, the first is the only one which gives Socialism even an appearance of moral and intellectual respectability. The second and third are follies; the fourth and fifth iniquities. But the idea of the elevation of the community above the individual is an ancient and a noble one. It is the inspiring principle of Plato's

¹ Eucken (trans. M'Cabe), *Socialism; an Analysis*, p. 22.

² Eucken, *op. cit.* p. 132.

Republic ; it is a prominent element in the Christian Gospel ; it is a recurrent theme in the lofty idealism of the medieval thinkers ; it is reiterated in More's *Utopia*, and in the writings of many seers and prophets down to the present day. In all these splendid dreams the central motive is self-sacrifice engendered by a consuming love. No doubt some of the early Socialists were in the line of the great Utopians ; they too had a noble conception of a universal commonwealth knit by bonds of comradeship and maintained by mutual service. But, alas, their influence was slight, and they were soon superseded by men like Marx, who substituted "take" for "give" ; hate for love ; class for community ; secularism for spirituality ; hard materialism for dreamy idealism ; war for peace ; bloodshed for brotherhood. The very principle of Marxism, "To each what he produces," is an individualistic principle, wholly antagonistic to the true communism of both the Platonic republic and the Christian Gospel. The only remnant of the communal conception which persists in the Marxian creed is the idea, not that the individual should serve the community, but that the community should maintain the individual. Thus, just as Marxian philosophy is but inverted Hegelianism, so is Marxian Socialism merely inverted Individualism.

Hence the first idea of Socialism—the elevation of the community above the individual—remains as a mere camouflage to conceal the naked hideousness of mere selfish lust for the goods of others, and to deceive the innocents of religion and philanthropy into lending their countenance to the policy and practice of bandits. For in the absence of the passion of universal brotherhood, and in the presence of

predatory class war, "Socialism is in its essence a raid of the have-nots upon the haves, and its moving spirit is class hate and love of plunder."¹ Unfortunately the camouflage of comradeship has succeeded in seducing some of the elect. Hence the existence of so-called "Christian Socialism," which, as has been well said, is "Christian only in so far as it is not Socialism, and Socialism only in so far as it is not Christian."² "Christian Socialism," indeed, is the vain illusion of a small band of bamboozled bishops, perverted priests, and confounded curates. Beholding the Socialist wolf in the woolly garment of lamb-like fraternity, they caress and fondle it, offering it the milk of the word to drink, when what it wants is blood.

Modern Socialism, divorced from its one possible redeeming quality, *i.e.* the genuine communal element of its ancient and medieval predecessors, is derived from three main sources, one English, one French, one German. (1) Its economic obsessions it inherited from a group of English thinkers—men of imperfect knowledge and unbalanced judgement—who voiced the reaction against the Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth century. Prominent among them were William Godwin, who denounced the institution of private property; Charles Hall, who attacked the capitalist system; William Thompson, who urged the proletarian right to the whole produce of labour; John Gray, who proclaimed the class war; Thomas Hodgskin, who anticipated the Marxian theory of value; John Francis Bray, who preached the Social Revolution; and Robert Owen, who taught com-

¹ Faraday, W. B., *Democracy and Capital*, p. 236.

² Hopkinson, A., *Hope for the Workers*, p. 36.

munism and co-operation.¹ (2) Its social theories it took over from a coterie of Gallic thinkers—men of a dreamy and unpractical idealism—who gave utterance to the vague fantasies generated by the French Revolution. Prominent among these were Saint-Simon, who desired the restoration of the state of *naturé* and the rehabilitation of the flesh; Fourier, who schemed for the abolition of all government and the reorganisation of humanity in autonomous phalanges, each consisting of four hundred families; Proudhon, who denounced property as theft and preached pure anarchism. (3) Its political proposals are of Teutonic origin. They owe their rise to the cogitations of the academic agitators of the abortive German Revolution of the middle of the nineteenth century. Prominent among these were Johann Rodbertus, who urged the State to take over the management of both the production and the distribution of wealth; Ferdinand Lassalle, who incited the proletariat to capture political power in order to improve their economic condition; and Karl Marx.

§ 45. *The Socialism of Karl Marx.*

In Karl Marx all the three streams of Socialist tendency—English, French, and German—met and mingled to produce, first, the torrent of the *Communist Manifesto* (1848), and, secondly, the dead sea of *Das Kapital* (1867). Marx himself (1818–1883) was a bourgeois Prussian Jew, whose proper name was Mordecai. As editor of the radical *Rheinische Zeitung*

¹ For interesting accounts of these pioneers see Foxwell's edition of A. Menger's *Right to the Whole Produce of Labour*; and Beer's *History of Socialism*.

in 1842, and (after six years of exile) of the revolutionary *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* in 1848-1849, he became so notorious as an advocate of extreme and sanguinary violence that Germany became impossible to him as a place of residence, though it never ceased to be his "spiritual home." He gained his evil pre-eminence as the enemy of all moderation: he urged the creation of a proletarian army; a mass attack on the bourgeoisie; the establishment of a Reign of Terror in order "to concentrate and abridge the hideous death agonies of society." Hatred was the master passion of his perverted soul; and the mystery of how so unsound a thinker, so dishonest a controversialist, so intolerant a dictator, so confused a writer, and so boring a pedant, should have risen to the rank of the founder of a new irrational religion, is solved when it is realised that his appeal is made to the most primitive and most intensely individualistic instincts of the undeveloped Cave Man. He appealed to his cupidity, to his jealousy, to his envy, to his malice, to his natural hatred of those better and more fortunate than himself. He became the prophet of the proletariat, making articulate the fury of the unhappy hordes of those who find themselves surrounded by a civilisation which they cannot comprehend and to which they can contribute nothing. "The Communists," ran the concluding sentence of the famous (and infamous) Manifesto, "disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communistic revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Workers of all lands, unite."

Thus the Marxian appeal was frankly to the predatory passions of the Undermen. There was in it no element of brotherhood, or charity, or compassion. It was a mere instigation to massacre and loot. Yet even Marx felt that a naked and unashamed incitement of the criminal instincts of the masses was likely to fail of its object—the Social Revolution. He paid a grudging tribute to the essential sanity and honesty of human nature by recognising the fact that in order to win general support, even among the Undermen, for his devil's gospel of spoliation, he must make it appear to have a foundation in Justice. He recognised, further, that in order to be successful his predatory army must be officered and led by sincere and respectable members of the capable middle class. He therefore devoted the later years of his parasitic life—during which he subsisted mainly on the doles of his deluded dupes—to the attempt to rationalise and moralise his predetermined creed. To do this he drew upon the ideas which he had gleaned in Paris from the works of Saint-Simon, Fourier, and Proudhon; and in London from extensive reading in the British Museum of the writings of the forgotten pioneers of English Socialism.

The result was, after many years, what Mr. H. G. Wells rightly calls that “monument of pretentious pedantry” entitled *Das Kapital* (1867). There is little that is original in this long, dreary, confused and ill-written work; and what is original—the theory of economic determinism—is false. For the most part it is a farrago of unacknowledged plagiarisms from the writings of others. His theory of value is Ricardo and Hodgskin's; his fantasy of “surplus value” is Owen's; his slogan of the Class War is Gray's;

his communism is Babœuf's; his anti-patriotism is Weishaupt's; his atheism is that of Anarcharsis Cloutz. What he did was to weld together these miscellaneous masses of error into one unintelligible whole, to exaggerate what was wrong in every element, and to put the ponderous product forward as a justification of the Social Revolution. *Das Kapital* (even yet only partially translated into English), was and is a failure. The influence of Marx survives not because of, but in spite of, the pseudo-philosophic fallacies of this abysmal apologia. So completely have its theories been demolished by criticism that even Socialists who have any regard for their intellectual reputations have to repudiate them. The influence of Marx continues to-day, as it arose eighty years ago, because of its irrational appeal to the sub-conscious egoism and unmitigated ferocity of the natural savage.

§ 46. *The Socialism of Sidney Webb.*

But for the notoriety which the *Communist Manifesto* had conferred upon Marx; but for the noise which he had made in the world for a quarter of a century as the trumpeter of terrorism; above all, but for the alarm which he had caused as the senior wrangler and prime mover in the first "International" of 1864, *Das Kapital* would have fallen still-born from the press. As it was, however, a good many people wanted to know what this firebrand had to say for himself; what explanation he could give of his amazing conflagration; what defence he proposed to offer for his insensate assaults upon thrones, aristocracies, and middle classes; upon religion, society,

and organised industry ; and even upon most of his fellow revolutionaries. Hence efforts were made to comprehend *Das Kapital*. Not many were even partially successful : the book was found to be almost unreadable, and much of it entirely unintelligible. Nevertheless three things caused the more devoted to persevere. First, its arid pages contained oases in the shape of vivid descriptions of conditions in industrial England ; secondly, it suggested, in the "Capitalist System," a plausible cause for the social evils of the time ; and, thirdly, it proposed as a single and simple remedy the expropriation of the financier and the landlord.

Among those who were impressed by the descriptions, convinced by the diagnosis, and attracted by the remedy recommended, were Mr. Sidney Webb and his fellow-founders of the Fabian Society in 1884. They at once became vocal and instrumental ; and many of them—having been favoured with length of days and some prosperity—remain so to the present day, albeit no longer in tune. Their first utterances served to emphasise their dissent from Marx rather than their fundamental agreement with him. As amiable idealists they repudiated his hateful materialism ; as mild members of the bourgeoisie they deplored his ferocity and rejected his dogma of the class war ; as educated economists they had to profess themselves entirely unable to accept the crude fallacy of the Marxian theory of value ; as philosophic thinkers they dissociated themselves from the Marxian obsession of economic determinism ; as constitutional democrats they declined to adopt the Marxian programme for the violent overthrow of the existing social system ; as sympathetic reformers they shrank

in horror from that antagonism to remedial measures and that deliberate aggravation of misery which is the avowed Marxian means for hastening the final catastrophe. Evolution, not revolution, was their watchword; they recognised the essential difference between the two methods, and were not deceived by any delusive imagination that the second was only an accelerated form of the first.

Their great idea was to capture the machinery of Government—central and local—and use the legislative and administrative power of the State to hasten social evolution. The egg which Marx hoped to hatch by breaking, they hoped to hatch by boiling. They were true Socialists, however, in that (1) they clung to the “surplus value” fallacy, viz. that “labour” produces much more than it gets;¹ (2) they aimed at the expropriation of the capitalist and the landlord; (3) they plotted the complete destruction of the existing industrial system and the construction of a new system from which private enterprise, private property, and all other kinds of privacy should be eliminated. Even more than Socialists, however, they were Fabians—profound believers in “the inevitability of gradualness.” Their eponymous hero and exalted model was the great Cunctator who secured his ends by craft, not force; by sapping, not storming; by slow deception, not swift destruction. They aimed at the steady

¹ This “Surplus Value” fallacy has been persistently promulgated in the notorious “Fabian Tract No. 5.” In spite of conclusive refutations by Professor A. L. Bowley and others, the statement continues to go forth that the “workers” who produce all the wealth receive only one-third of it. Mr. Robert Blatchford, for many years editor of the Socialist *Clarion*, rightly characterises this statement as “grossly incorrect,” and honestly adds: “All wealth is *not* produced by labour, and probably two-thirds instead of one-third of the wealth produced go to labour” (*Sunday Chronicle*, March 23, 1919).

undermining of the capitalist organisation of industry, by encroaching control, by confiscatory taxation, by growing nationalisation and municipalisation of profitable enterprises, by the break-up of the poor law and the vast increase of State-pensioners, and by the development of a universal bureaucracy. For, above all, they were Collectivists, advocates of State action, believers in the omni-competence of political authority. Marx had schemed for the seizure of political power in order that he might use it to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat, and, having so used it, might destroy it. The Fabian Collectivists made it the everlasting foundation of their bureaucratic New Jerusalem, from which all competition and all the progress which flows from competition were to be banished. So fundamental, indeed, was Collectivism to the Fabian scheme that its Socialism came to be regarded in many innocent quarters as nothing more than an extension of State action. Indignant Marxians complained and protested, saying: "Literary parasites of the capitalist class are flooding the press with essays labelled 'Socialism,' in which everything is called 'Socialism,' from a profit-sharing bakery to the Government printing office." The complaint was justified: it was a monstrous abuse of language to transfer the term "Socialism" from its proper connotation, viz. the expropriation of the capitalist and the landlord, to the Collectivist means by which the Fabians proposed to accomplish their Socialistic ends. The "terminological inexactitude," however, was a deliberate camouflage, and it sufficed to deceive myriads of the elect. Countless hosts of guileless Christians and muddle-headed Humanitarians have been won by the pleasing pictures

drawn by the Fabians, of national railways and municipal milk, into supporting the cause whose ultimate purpose is as subversive of Society as the Marxian Class War itself.

§ 47. *The Merits of Socialism.*

In any controversy, to deny all merit to one's opponent is a mistake: it is probably a fallacy in fact; it is certainly an error in tactics. It is a mistake, however, frequently made: it is, for example, the one thing common to that die-hard organ *The Patriot*, and to that live-with-difficulty organ the *Daily Herald*. To suppose that any cause which wins enthusiastic support from large bodies of men and women, during a considerable period of time, is wholly bad, is to cast a slur upon human nature which would be fatal to any belief in practicable democracy. It is necessary for the democrat to have faith both in the sanity and in the honesty of the average man. Hence in explaining the vogue of such widespread aberrations and persistent superstitions as Christian Science, Theosophy, Millenarianism, Faith-healing, and Socialism, it is important to inquire what respectable appeal they can have made to the minds and consciences of their dupes.

It may be freely admitted that Socialism, although in its net result one of the most blighting curses that have ever fallen upon the human race, has performed several useful functions. If one cannot go so far as Mr. Sidney Webb when he says, "Socialists may be idealists, but they are not idiots,"¹ one can at least allow that Socialists, although materialists, are not

¹ Webb, quoted in *Observer*, October 14, 1923.

wholly without excuse for their devotion to their false religion. The following may be conceded as merits to Socialism. First, in theory at any rate, the better types of Socialism exalt the claims of the community above those of the individual, and hold up standards of personal self-sacrifice and public service. It is true that the self-sacrifice is to be extorted from the rich, and that the service is to be imposed upon the strong; but all the same the conception of sacrifice and service is there. It is this communal conception, as we have seen, which commends the idea of Socialism to many religious and philanthropic persons who cannot distinguish theoretical appearances from practical realities.¹ Secondly, Socialism, especially in its Fabian form, enlarges the idea of the State and its functions, delivering Government from the fetters placed upon it by the Philosophical Radicals and the Administrative Nihilists, and showing that political power can be properly applied to any purpose willed by the community as a whole. Thirdly, Socialism emphasises the paramount importance of the question of the "condition of the people," and rightly insists that no state of Society can be considered satisfactory or permanently tolerable in which so much poverty and misery exist as at present. Fourthly, Socialism stresses the influence of environment upon character, and points out with striking insistence, that virtue, health, and knowledge cannot possibly flourish or maintain themselves in circumstances such as prevail in our factories and our slums. Fifthly, Socialism points out, with an

¹ From Marxian theory, of course, the conception is absent: in that evil and purely predatory cult the idea of community is supplanted by that of class.

impressive array of proofs and instances, that countless multitudes—children, invalids, lunatics, workless, and others—are victims of circumstances which they did not create and cannot control, and from which they are unable to escape. Finally, Socialism depicts in lurid language the diseases of the body economic, and in particular such as spring from the conscienceless commercialism of these latter days. Here it renders a real and valuable service to the community, although it usually mars it by exaggeration and by lack of both comprehension and charity. The strength of the early Christian Socialists lay in their descriptions of industrial conditions: such books as *Alton Locke* stirred the public imagination and touched the social conscience. The one useful portion of Marx's *Das Kapital* is that in which he describes from authentic sources the deplorable condition of the operatives—men, women, and children—in the worse kind of factories and workshops. The influence of the Fabian Essays and Tracts is due primarily, not to their unsound theories or their disputable statistics, but to their effective (if biassed and unbalanced) presentation of the evil consequences which flow from competition unchecked by conscience, from capitalism unmitigated by compassion, and from commercialism unrelieved by charity.

§ 48. *The Defects of Socialism.*

The main merits of Socialism may be summarised in the phrases, *vivid description* and *passionate appeal*. Its chief defects may be classified under the two headings, *false diagnosis* and *quack remedy*.

We have seen that the lyrical capacities of the

leading Socialists are of a high order. In lurid language they depict the diseases of Society; with emotional intensity they clamour for permission to cure them. They are like the vendors of some patent ointment who harrow the feelings of the suffering community by illustrated advertisements exposing the horrors of aggravated ulcers, and then take advantage of the psychological prostration of their victims to palm off their worthless nostrum upon them. It does not follow that because a person can give an accurate description of the obvious, or because he can move the feelings of the sympathetic, he can be trusted either to make a sound diagnosis of the sources of a malady, or to prescribe an effective remedy. Too often it is wrongly assumed that cognisance of symptoms implies acquaintance with causes and skill to cure. At most of the Socialist meetings which it has been my painful duty to attend, by far the longest portion of the proceedings has been devoted to mere delineation and denunciation of existing conditions. In the heated emotional atmosphere thus created it has seemed to be taken for granted that the orator's explanation of these conditions is necessarily the right one, and his suggested panacea the only conceivable restorative.

Fortunately for the future of humanity the Socialist nostrum has been put to the test of frequent experience. Everywhere, and without exception, it has proved to be a complete and disastrous failure. The phalanges of Fourier; the colonies of Robert Owen; the co-operative societies of the Christian Socialists; the communistic experiments of William Lane—these and countless others have demonstrated the fact that

Socialism runs counter to fundamental and ineradicable instincts of human nature.¹ On the top of these comes the crowning demonstration given by the economic ruin of Bolshevik Russia. He must indeed be a fanatic of irrational credulity who in the face of such unvaried and conclusive evidence can continue to proclaim on merely theoretical grounds the efficacy of his quack remedy. Even the more modest and less ambitious experiments at municipalisation and nationalisation undertaken under the inspiration of the Fabian Collectivists provide an impressive catalogue of prosperous private enterprises brought to bankruptcy, of efficient services reduced to chaotic ineptitude, and of taxpayers or ratepayers mulcted and oppressed by lazy and disobliging bureaucrats. If further evidence were needed, it was amply supplied by the results of Government Control during the War. "In the sphere of industry," says Sir Charles Macara, "the Government have behaved all along as though bewitched."² Mr. Gilbert Stone concurs: "If Government Control had been maintained for even a decade it would have plunged the world into universal ruin."³ Says also Mr. A. Paterson, "If the War has done nothing else it has hanged, drawn, quartered, and cremated the movement for bureaucratic control of industry, and scattered its ashes to the winds."⁴ The history of Socialism, indeed, in all its forms—Utopian, Marxian, Christian, Fabian—is a long and lamentable

¹ As has been before mentioned, an account of the failure of nearly eighty Socialist experiments will be found in Mallock's *Limits of Pure Democracy*, Book IV. chaps. ii. and iii. Summary notes on the more conspicuous fiascos are given by Macnamara, *Labour at the Cross Roads*, pp. 24 sq.; Millar, *Socialism*, pp. 58 sq., and Cox, *Economic Liberty*, pp. 203 sq.

² Macara, *The Industrial Situation*, p. 23.

³ Stone, *History of Labour*, p. 392.

⁴ Paterson, *Weapon of the Strike*, p. 247.

record of unrealised theories, addled experiments, and disillusioned dupes.

What is the explanation of this disastrous catalogue of ludicrous and tragic failures ? It is a simple one. The Socialist diagnosis of the diseases of the community is a false diagnosis ; its remedy is a fraudulent nostrum which aggravates rather than alleviates the evils which it professes to cure. Space fails me to do more than indicate the leading lines of its most monstrous errors. Some of them I have already touched upon, and I shall have to revert to others when I come to speak of the true way to political and industrial progress.

(1) *The Psychology of Socialism* is wrong : Socialism does violence to such natural and irrepressible human instincts as love of liberty, love of property, love of emulation, love of offspring. (2) *The Economics of Socialism* are wrong : the Socialist theories of value and "surplus value" are false theories ; the Socialist doctrines of land, capital, and labour, of rent, interest, and wages, are all distorted by class prejudice ; of foreign commerce and international finance few Socialists seem to have any conception at all. (3) *The History taught by Socialism* is wrong : it is engrossed with economic factors to the exclusion of those more spiritual ; hence it is perverted by the grossest inaccuracies and partialities. (4) *The Sociology of Socialism* is wrong : it lays excessive stress on the influence of environment and absurdly underestimates the influence of character in determining human destiny ; it is at open war with the proved results of modern biological research. (5) *The Politics of Socialism* are wrong : Socialism, while professing to seek the good of the community as a whole, concentrates all

its attention upon the interests of a single class, attacking all the rest in person and in property; it aims at an equality which is to be secured by the levelling down of all that rises above the swampy flats of the proletariat. (6) *The Ethics of Socialism* are wrong: they are selfish, materialistic, utilitarian, opportunist.

"Socialism," well says Mr. A. Hopkinson, "once the dream of kindly but foolish men, has become a monstrous tyrant, spreading abroad envy, greed, and hatred, holding mankind from the path of true progress and even striving to drag the human race back to the beasts from which it sprang."¹ Or, to apply the words which Mr. R. H. Tawney uses in another connection, Socialism is "a poison which inflames every wound, and turns every trivial scratch into a malignant ulcer. Society will not solve the particular problems of industry which afflict it, until that poison is expelled."²

¹ Hopkinson, *Hope of the Workers*, p. 12.

² Tawney, *Acquisitive Society*, p. 241.

CHAPTER IX

SYNDICALISM

"Syndicalism is the most terrible Social phenomenon that the world has ever seen. In Syndicalism we have for the first time in human history a full-fledged philosophy of the Under-Man."—MR. L. STODDARD.

"The teaching of Syndicalism may be summarised in one simple precept—that those who have ought to be deprived of their property for the benefit of those who have not."—SIR ARTHUR CLAY.

"The purpose of Syndicalism is the total destruction of the existing industrial organisation."—SIR ARTHUR CLAY.

"Syndicalism is largely a revolt against Socialism."—MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD.

"Never have the chefs of Socialism produced a galantine to compare with that [Guild Socialism] of Mr. G. D. H. Cole! Here a little bit of Louis Blanc, there a scrap from Vidal, but above all solid slabs from Marx and Sorel! And all this concealed by a cunning glaze of modernity."—MRS. N. H. WEBSTER.

"I have somewhat regretfully come to the conclusion that Guild Socialism, as at present formulated, is not the sovereign remedy that at first it seemed. I find much of inconsistency, irrelevancy, and obscurity in its doctrines."—DR. NILES CARPENTER.

§ 49. *The Failure of Socialism.*

It is on the side of production that Socialism fails most conspicuously as an industrial system. Capitalism—which is only another name for economic freedom and private enterprise—delivers the goods: Socialism does not. Socialism is a consumers' creed: it is primarily concerned with the distribution of such wealth as exists, and is careless of the fact that it is

destroying all effective incentive to produce fresh wealth in the future. It aims at a "minimum wage" which shall be paid irrespective of output; it advocates unemployment doles at the full trade-union rate of full-time pay; it encourages "ca' canny" and deliberate restriction of product; it discountenances the working of overtime even when it would bring vast advantages to all affected; it opposes the application of new scientific methods to industry, or burdens them with obstacles which make them unprofitable; it penalises workmen who work too hard or too efficiently, compelling all to keep at the same dead level of average incompetence and semi-activity; it fosters insubordination and indiscipline in the ranks of labour; it hampers employers and managers in the performance of their difficult tasks; it prevents the accumulation of capital, by ignorant abuse of capitalists and by threats of progressive spoliation; it hinders enterprise and initiative in every conceivable way. And then it says, with Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb, that "the Capitalist System as a coherent whole has demonstrably broken down," and that "the failure of the reign of Capitalism, as the principal form of the nation's industrial and social organisation, must now be recognised and admitted"! ¹

It would not be a marvel if, as a result of the insane and persistent attempts of the Socialists to wreck it, the "Capitalist System"—the system of free enterprise and personal initiative—had broken down. In spite, however, of their efforts, it is still functioning extraordinarily well, providing even the Socialists themselves with necessities and comforts which in many cases they neither earn nor deserve.

¹ Webb, *Decay of Capitalist Civilisation*, p. 170.

It is not the Capitalist System, but the Socialist System, which has broken down. First, it has failed to destroy its effective and beneficent rival. Secondly, it has failed to provide any substitute for it. Mr. Gompers, the great American Labour leader, was not speaking too strongly when he said to Socialists: "Economically you are unsound; socially you are wrong; industrially you are an impossibility."¹

Socialism runs directly counter to all the dominant human instincts which cause men to produce. In the name of equality it destroys the freedom which is necessary for effective activity; in the name of co-operation it puts an end to that healthy competition which is the bracing air of industrial activity, and the main means by which the community secures efficient service; in the name of community it deprives men of the capacity to acquire property, and so removes the chief incentive to labour; in the name of nationalisation it appropriates successful private businesses, and thus damps down energy and initiative; in the name of public assistance it discourages both thrift and self-help; in the name of readjusted taxation it institutes a vindictive spoliation of those who, by diligence and self-restraint, have managed to save; in the name of "capital levy" it projects an orgy of legalised loot. In short, all the principles and all the devices of Socialism seem to be as carefully contrived as though they had been designed in Bedlam, to depress labour, discourage enterprise, damp initiative, discountenance forethought, prevent the accumulation of capital, encourage recklessness and extravagance, foster parasitism, ruin industry. In the supposed interests of the proletariat, who can

¹ Gompers, quoted in House of Commons Debate, July 16, 1923.

do nothing except breed, it tends to drag the whole community down to one disastrous level of laziness, incompetence, and destitution.

If there are any who consider that this opinion of the tendencies of Socialism is excessively unfavourable, they are invited to study, first, the record of the results of the productive efforts of the Christian Socialists as set forth in Dr. C. E. Raven's book already referred to ;¹ secondly, the story of William Lane's "New Australian" communist colony, established in Paraguay in 1893, as set forth in Stewart Grahame's *Where Socialism Failed* ; and, thirdly, the history of the break-down of production in Bolshevik Russia as portrayed by Trotsky himself in his *Defence of Terrorism*.²

§ 50. *The Rise of Syndicalism.*

The history of all attempts to apply Socialism in practice up to the present day may be summarised in the sequence—initial enthusiasm; followed by apathy, inefficiency, laziness, quarrelling, indiscipline, anarchy, bankruptcy, despotism, final collapse. The early stages of this rake's progress are soon passed through : it is not long before bankruptcy is reached. But the

¹ Above, Chapter VII. § 38.

² Interesting confirmation of Trotsky's confession of failure is given by a Socialist writer, V. I. Issaiev, who in a communication to *Justice*, December 11, 1919, says : " The general conclusion to be drawn from this survey of the economic results of nationalisation in Soviet Russia may be summarised only in one way—*complete failure*. The Bolsheviks have not increased the productivity of Labour ; they have not developed the productive forces of the Country, nor rendered industry self-supporting. The total of the commodities produced does not anything like cover the expenses of production, the whole of industry living, therefore, on state subsidies. In view of the necessity of providing the population at all costs with at least a certain quantity of goods, the Bolsheviks are returning to capitalist methods of production."

stage of despotism is long and cruel. In the hope of averting the final collapse, the Socialist "Lords of the Jungle" stop short of nothing. Even the mild Christian Socialist, E. V. Neale, who squandered £60,000 in his pathetic efforts to keep his co-operative cranks at work, had to become a benevolent autocrat. William Lane in Paraguay, before he abandoned his intractable communists and allowed them to become more or less successful individualists, was driven to exercise over them a tyranny that was the negation of democracy. As to Russia, we have already seen how Lenin and Trotsky openly repudiate freedom as a bourgeois weakness, and unblushingly avow the method of terrorism. The government of the Tsars was humane when compared with the sanguinary despotism of the Soviet, whose sole justification, even in the eyes of Socialists, has been forfeited now that it has permitted private property in land to the peasants, and has itself reverted to capitalism and sought the aid of foreign financiers. Even the mild and reduced Socialism of the Fabian Collectivists leads to an intolerable bureaucratic oppression: its operation is marked by formalism, procrastination, lack of enterprise; by irritating interferences; by unnecessary inquisitions; by restrictions and extortions of a paralysing variety.

The failure of Socialism, therefore, has been of a twofold character. Economically, it has failed to produce the wealth necessary to maintain the new society; on the contrary, it has proved to be the destroyer of industry, and the fruitful creator of nothing except destitution and despair. Politically, it has failed to confer the freedom which it promised should flow from the elimination of the capitalist and

the landlord; on the contrary, it has established either a monarchic tyranny or a bureaucratic inquisition, oriental in severity. Hence a reaction against Socialism in two opposite directions. On the one hand, there is the natural and healthy reaction against bureaucracy, and towards democracy, liberty, and individualism. This reaction is admirably depicted and defended in that excellent book, *Economic Liberty*, by Mr. Harold Cox, who, himself once a Fabian Socialist, has come to realise that Socialism "is essentially inhuman"—that is to say, "is entirely removed from the real facts of human life."¹ On the other hand, however, there is a deplorable and insane reaction against constitutionalism, and towards violence, oligarchy, and syndicalism. It is the nemesis of irrational movements like Socialism, that when they fail they cause their more fanatical votaries to resort to still more irrational excesses; just as the disillusioned opium-eater tends to take larger doses of his drug, or the victim of *delirium tremens* tries to cure himself with increased potations of brandy. This is the explanation of Syndicalism.

Syndicalism had its origin in France during the closing years of the nineteenth century: it was the Gallican counterpart to the new Industrial Unionism in England. It arose as a spontaneous rank-and-file movement within the French trade unions (*syndicats*)—which, we should remark, occupy a far less important place in the industrial organisation of their country than do the English trade unions in ours. It signalled, first, a revolt against political method which, in the corrupt condition of French public life at that period, had conspicuously failed to deal honestly and

¹ Cox, *Economic Liberty*, p. 199.

adequately with the problems of labour ; secondly, a protest against the failure of Socialism to redeem its promises—a protest particularly pointed by the three notorious cases of MM. Millerand, Viviani, and Briand, all of whom, having been vehement advocates of Socialistic measures when out of office, when in office had become sober, efficient, and consequently decidedly non-Socialistic statesmen ; thirdly, an insurrection against bureaucratic tyranny in industry itself, and a demand for a return to more natural conditions of group autonomy.

§ 51. *The Syndicalist Idea.*

In so far as Syndicalism is a revolt against Socialism it is impossible not to sympathise with it. It is admirable in its indignation with middle-class ideologues, who capture the trade-unions by means of specious fallacies and then employ them for their own political purposes ; it is excellent in its denunciation of the corruption and log-rolling which almost inevitably degrade politics to the level of a criminal conspiracy when the strong two-party system of democracy gives place to a welter of intriguing economic groups ; it is powerful in its protest against the inquisitorial oppression of all kinds of extraneous jacks-in-office. But, unfortunately, Syndicalism does not carry its revolt against Socialism far enough. It is a revolt against its methods, not against its ends. It is no more than a rebellion against the politicians of the Labour Party ; a repudiation of constitutional action as a means of achieving the Social Revolution ; a rejection of Collectivism or *Étatisme* as an instrument for the installation of the Proletarian Paradise. It

attacks Socialism not because it dissents from its policy or its purposes, but merely because it realises that it is not likely to achieve them by the peaceful means of argument, appeal, discussion, and vote. It accepts in the fullest degree the Marxian economics with its disastrous implications of Communism and Class War, differing from the extremist Marxians only in the conviction that Communism can never be initiated by the State.

It is, indeed, upon the State that the assault of the Syndicalists is particularly directed—the State, which to the Fabian Collectivists is to be the very cornerstone of the new social edifice ; the State, which even, to the Marxians is the indispensable scaffolding for its erection. The Syndicalists repudiate the State and deny its sovereignty ; reject democracy with its principle of majority rule ; disavow the authority of law ; even go so far as to renounce the maxims of morality and the rule of reason itself. The place of the State in the Syndicalist system is to be taken by the Trade Unions—not the old and constitutional Craft Unions of the English type, but the new and revolutionary Industrial Unions of the Continental and American types, vast agglomerations of miscellaneous labourers of all sorts, consisting mainly of unskilled under-men, and dominated by nameless oligarchies of extremists. How this congeries of *syndicats* is to function in politics seems hardly to have been considered at all ; for it is one of the curious features of the avowed irrationalism of this strange cult of violence that it refuses to look beyond the catastrophe of the Social Revolution, or to frame any plans of reconstruction. Its principles, if it can be said to have any, are those of Creative Evolution.

The means by which the Social Revolution is to be effected is the "General Strike." The dogma of the "General Strike," indeed, is without question the central article of the Syndicalist creed. It is a dogma foreshadowed by Mirabeau, formulated by the Chartist Benbow, promulgated in the *International* of 1864, accepted by later Communistic Congresses, and finally adopted as a working policy of the French *syndicats* under the influence of the passionate preaching of Tortelier, Pelloutier, Pouget, Griffuelhes, and others. Various middle-class intellectuals, *e.g.* Georges Sorel and Antonio Labriola, disgusted with politics, and attracted by proletarian violence as an alternative to caucus corruption, have worked up the idea of the "General Strike" into a scheme of systematic mythology. It takes the place in the Syndicalist cult which the Day of Judgement occupied in the mediaeval imagination; it is to be the sudden catastrophe in the imminent future which shall bring the existing order to a red and roaring end, consigning capitalists to perdition, and conveying the faithful proletarians to their Earthly Paradise. Thus, to Syndicalists, striking is almost an end in itself: on the one hand, like a religious revival, it will prepare the elect for the great Day; on the other hand, "any strike, however insignificant, *may* develop into the final General Strike itself which like the Napoleonic battle is completely to annihilate a condemned régime."¹

Lastly, the Syndicalist struggle with bourgeois

¹ Sorel, *Reflections on Violence*, Hulme's Translation, p. 297. Cf. also A. D. Lewis, *Syndicalism and the General Strike*, p. 10: "All strikes are useful. They train men in working together and rouse their spirit; they encourage insubordination and make revolution more probable. The great weapon of the workers against their masters is disorder"; also p. 54: "It is the great value of the General Strike that it overturns Society absolutely, and leads to an unknown future entirely different from the past."

Capitalism is to be waged with unmitigated violence. No methods of destruction or terrorism are to be eschewed. Expediency alone, and not morality at all, is to decide the means by which the present order of society is to be brought to its predestined end. Hence Syndicalists develop a fanatical ingenuity, fiend-like in its iniquity and unscrupulousness, for ruining industry, stopping production, and paralysing those who do not accept their creed. "Sabotage" in all its infinite varieties is their speciality; "class war" in all its extremest horrors is their chosen medium of operation. To all efforts of conciliation, compromise, co-operation, reform, they are on principle opposed.¹

§ 52. *Syndicalism in Practice.*

Mr. Ramsay MacDonald has deplored Syndicalism as "a wild revolt of the anarchistically inclined workmen."² It has, indeed, made havoc of both the theory and the practice of the Collectivism of the Fabian Society and the Independent Labour Party. In its attack upon the State; in its contempt for law; in its repudiation of leadership; in its anti-social animosities; in its defiance of morality; in its abandonment of reason; in its ferocious violence and profound criminality, it has brought the deepest discredit upon the cause whose ends it seeks to achieve by means so irrational and so diabolical. For Syndicalism has not remained a mere theory in the air; it has inspired its votaries in many countries to disastrous attempts to realise its nightmare dreams in

¹ "The reformer," says Sorel, "is an incompetent creature who hinders and discourages progress" (Lewis, *Syndicalism*, p. 69).

² MacDonald, *Syndicalism*, p. 16.

practice. It is, indeed, pre-eminently the creed of action—of “Direct Action.” It is the cult of the “conscious minority” who are resolved by force to impose their will upon the “inert masses.”

(1) In France, the home of its origin, it has made its most remarkable attempts. They have all been conspicuous failures. This is all the more surprising and gratifying because the French C.G.T. (*Confédération Générale du Travail*) is wholly dominated by Syndicalists who are able to mobilise at any moment all the forces of the constituent trade unions against the State and Society. The first effort, made in 1906, to secure an eight-hour day by means of a general strike was defeated by the energy of the employers. A great postal strike in 1909, supported by the whole resources of the C.G.T., broke on the resolute resistance of the Government. The same fate met the still more formidable railway strike in 1910, when M. Briand—himself in his callow youth a leading advocate of Direct Action—countered the conspiracy against the State by issuing an order for mobilisation, and calling the rebellious railwaymen to the colours. Subsequent attempts to effect revolution by industrial means, 1913 and 1920, have similarly been frustrated by the steady refusal of the community and its political agents to be coerced by any minority, however self-conscious and highly illuminated.

(2) Other countries beside France have been the victims of Syndicalist upheavals. Hitherto, except in Russia, they have been met with a constitutional resistance which has sufficed to repress them. A notable attempt at a general strike in Sweden during the autumn of 1909 was defeated in a manner which should prove to be a model and an inspiration to all

communities menaced in a similar way : the citizens voluntarily and spontaneously organised themselves into a "Public Security Brigade" to carry on necessary services and to prevent sabotage. On the rock of their resolution and energy the waves of Direct Action surged in vain. Swedish society vindicated its primary right to continue to exist. An English observer, much impressed by the unexpected resourcefulness of the citizenry in the emergency, remarked : "An attack had been made on the community, but the community had proved quite capable of defending itself. The weapon which the strikers had most relied on not only failed to do harm, but had turned against themselves. The *Public Security Brigade* broke the General Strike."¹ Italy (especially Milan) and Spain (especially Barcelona) have shown themselves peculiarly and frequently liable to catch the Syndicalist infection. The constant and deadly attacks made in both countries upon Industry, Society, and the State—among which the seizure of the Milanese factories by the revolutionaries in 1920 was the most conspicuous—led to, and perhaps necessitated, the Fascist reaction of Signor Mussolini and the Marquess d' Estella respectively. To a democrat these reactions cannot but appear deplorable ; but, as in the case of the Roman Dictatorships, the urgent claims of the menaced community may have justified a suspension of constitutional forms. It would appear that in neither of these Latin countries do the moral and intellectual pre-requisites of democracy exist.

In America, Syndicalism is the motive principle of the so-called "Industrial Workers of the World"—

¹ Penson in *Economic Journal*, December 1909.

the notorious I.W.W.; better described as the "I Won't Works" or the "Idle Wastrels of the World." A brief account of the nefarious activities of this evil confederacy (in whose remorseless hands sabotage has been carried to the length of dynamite outrages, vast incendiarism, and widespread assassination) is given in *The Times* of February 23, 1918, where the I.W.W. is well described as "an association of criminals of the worst type, and a hotbed of crime." Syndicalism was the leading element in the abortive Russian revolution of July 1914, and in the successful upheavals of 1917.

§ 53. *British Syndicalism.*

Syndicalism in its rank and undiluted form has not obtained much hold in Britain. Its repudiation of the State; its total rejection of politics; its defiance of law; its unmitigated violence; its ostentatious irrationality, make no appeal to any except a small clique of revolutionary fire-brands. To the British democracy, with its old and fine tradition of constitutional advance, it is anathema; to the cautious trade unionist, with his memory of power and prosperity built up on a secure basis of legislative enactment, it is raging folly; even to the Socialist Labour leader, with his dream of a parliamentary majority and cabinet office, it is an unwelcome and embarrassing ally. Nevertheless in reduced and disguised forms it has had a profound and disastrous influence in this country during the past twenty years, and more especially since in 1910 Mr. Haywood of the I.W.W. came from America to South Wales in order to inflame the miners to revolt. Its main British manifestations

are (1) the Miners' Movement for the Syndicalisation of the Mines ; (2) the Industrial Unionism of Mr. Tom Mann ; and (3) the misnamed " Guild Socialism " of Mr. G. D. H. Cole.

(1) The Miners' Movement for the Syndicalisation of the Mines is fully expounded in the famous pamphlet entitled *The Miners' Next Step*, published early in 1912. This pamphlet was the work of seven or eight men, of whom only one, Mr. W. H. Mainwaring of Rhondda, was named. The policy outlined in the pamphlet is, briefly, first, to secure the minimum wage irrespective of output ; secondly, to reduce output until the mine owners are bankrupt ; and then, finally, to take over the mines and work them in the interests of the miners. Among the most significant articles of the detailed manifesto embodied in the pamphlet are : Article I. " That the old policy of the identity of interest between employers and ourselves be abolished, and a policy of open hostility installed " ; and Article XII. " That a continual agitation be carried on in favour of increasing the minimum wage and shortening the hours of work until we have extracted the whole of the employers' profits." The pamphleteers expect that as soon as the mine owners approach the verge of ruin, they—not the miners—will call out for nationalisation. " As they feel the increasing pressure which we shall bring on their profits, they will loudly cry for nationalisation. We shall and must strenuously oppose this." They conclude : " Our objective begins to take shape before your eyes : every industry thoroughly organised in the first place to fight, to gain control of, and then to administer that industry." Such is Syndicalism in practice. This frank avowal (which apparently was

not intended to be broadcasted) throws a lurid light on the twin agitations for nationalisation of mines and for minimum wage. Neither was sincere. "Nationalisation" was a euphemism for "Syndicalisation"; for what have Syndicalists to do with either nation or State? "Minimum wage" was demanded not as an end in itself, or as a means towards a higher standard of living, but merely as an instrument with which to ruin the coal industry, expropriate the shareholders, and acquire the mines. It is a pitiful revelation of a policy of craft and force such as we should not, according to Labour idealists, expect to find outside the sphere of Capitalist politics.

(2) The Industrial Unionism of Mr. Tom Mann is Syndicalism but slightly reduced by a recognition of the existence of the State as an agent to be coerced into obedience to the dominant trade unions. Mr. Mann has been good enough to sublimate his creed into a formal confession of faith; it will be found *in extenso* in Mr. J. H. Harley's *Syndicalism* (pp. 44-45). It consists of nine articles the substance of which is as follows: Industrial action is the prime means by which trade unions can attain their ends; effective industrial action implies on the one hand the elimination of non-unionists, and on the other hand the close co-operation of all the various unions; the aim of industrial action should be first and at once the shortening of hours and the raising of wages, secondly and ultimately the abolition of capitalism.¹

¹ Mr. Tom Mann's pamphlet, *Power through the General Strike* (Co-operative Printing Society, 1923), ends with a special appeal to the miners as follows: "Miners, line up at once for the General Strike. Your demands should include a six-hour day, a five-day week, one pound a day. The insolence of the mine owners impudently urging longer hours of work must be met by courageous action and complete solidarity."

(3) The misnamed "Guild Socialism" of Mr. G. D. H. Cole demands a section to itself.

§ 54. "*Guild Socialism.*"

The term "Guild Socialism" was first used in 1912 by a group of rebels from the Fabian Society who wished by the retention of the word "Socialism" to conceal the fact of their utter abandonment of their former creed. "Guild Socialism" is not Socialism at all. It is a modified form of Syndicalism; a reduced, middle-class, highly compromised version of the sanguinary cult of the I.W.W. It is peculiar to England, and is regarded with contempt and loathing by the full-blooded Syndicalists of the Continent and America, as well as by the various British schools of Socialists from which its devotees are for the most part deserters. Even in England it has but little vogue, save in the outer circles of the academic world, and among small anarchic bands of Ritualistic clergymen and heterodox Dissenters, who (being extreme individualists) desire emancipation from the irksome control of political and ecclesiastical authority. Its formulators are "intellectuals" of the worst type—men who combine an amazing ignorance of actual life and of the practical problems of industry with a viciousness of temper and a ferocious intolerance such as one usually associates with religious persecutors.¹

"Guild Socialists," like Syndicalists, repudiate

¹ "Most of the Guild Socialist writers combine more than the Crusaders' usual aggressiveness and intolerance. They defend their doctrines against all criticisms with the vigour and acrimony of wasps whose nest is attacked. . . . It seems at times an essential condition of a belief in Guild Socialism to hold that all those of a different opinion are either knaves or fools" (G. C. Field, *Guild Socialism, a Critical Examination*, pp. 4-5).

the authority of the State over industry ; reject political methods of settling economic problems ; place their reliance on direct action ; and look to the trade unions as their main agents for the carrying through of their particular programme of Social Revolution. Like Syndicalists, too, they are vehement proclaimers of the Marxian dogma of the Class War ; advocates of the extremest forms of violence ; belligerents whose avowed purpose is " the overthrow of Capitalist Society." Again, like Syndicalists, they are prepared to show no mercy to non-unionist working men. Though many of them were " conscientious objectors " during the great struggle for existence which this country waged with Germany, they will tolerate no " conscientious objection " in the case of the conscript armies which wage the Class War. " The non-unionist," says Mr. G. D. H. Cole (who is the Sorel of Guild Socialism), " in an organised industry is a traitor to his class, and the workers have no use for traitors " ; hence " the blackleg should have no more protection than the law is absolutely forced to give him," for although " it is not as a rule wise to offer physical violence to blacklegs, there is nothing wrong about it except in the eyes of the law and the middle classes." ¹ Finally, like Syndicalists, they regard the General Strike, with all its concomitants of sabotage and savagery, as the great culminating catastrophe towards the hastening of which all their activities should tend.

In what respects, then, do they differ from Syndicalists ? Mainly in two. First, they do attempt, unlike the Syndicalists, to frame some coherent scheme of the Earthly Paradise which they propose to set up after

¹ Cole, *The World of Labour*, pp. 376-7 and 387-8.

the Day of Judgement. Secondly, they do recognise, unlike the Syndicalists, that consumers as well as producers have some rights in life, and they propose to set up some sort of an organisation, beside the trade union or guild organisation, to safeguard the interests of the community. About these two positive articles of their chaotic creed, however, they quarrel and wrangle among themselves like Kilkenny cats. Mr. Hartley Withers, after quoting some examples of the academic language of the Guild leaders, justly remarks: "If the practical intellectuals are to include such exponents of Guild doctrine as Messrs. Cole, Hobson, and Orage, the specimens which have already been quoted of their dialectical methods and their controversial geniality seem to promise that the world of the National Guilds will have a pleasant resemblance to Donnybrook Fair."¹ Nothing, indeed, like the storms which rage in the economic teacups of these semi-syndicalist ideologues has been seen since the days of old when Byzantine theologians slew one another on the quays of Constantinople in furious conflict respecting the iota subscripts and hard breathings of the Arian controversy.

¹ Withers, *Case for Capitalism*, p. 229.

CHAPTER X

ANARCHISM

"The elements of disorder are at present in exceptional strength among the rank and file, and may break through restraint at any moment."—Dr. ARTHUR SHADWELL.

"There are undeniably some young fools, ignorant of history and politics, and without the common human sympathies, who desire chaos."—Mr. C. D. BURNS.

"The Labour Party is pledged to a policy of wholesale demolition and reconstruction ; but it has no clear view as to how the reconstruction is to come about."—Professor RAMSAY MUIR.

"There are no fundamental differences in the Labour Party. The differences are merely on details."—Mr. PHILIP SNOWDEN.

"One object is common to all—Socialists, Syndicalists, and Anarchists. To each the destruction of the existing organisation of society is an indispensable preliminary to the accomplishment of their designs."—Sir ARTHUR CLAY.

"Is there anything necessarily humiliating and degrading in receiving orders from some one else ?"—Mr. G. C. FIELD.

"I was well ; I would be better ; I am here."—*Epitaph on a Tombstone.*

§ 55. *The Wranglings of Revolutionaries.*

THE leading constructive idea of the " Guild Socialists " is self-government in industry. The idea itself is a good one, and therefore by no means peculiar to " Guild Socialists." It was advanced a century ago by such men as Robert Owen and William Thompson ; it has been re-emphasised in recent years by such sane trade unionists as Mr. J. H. Bunting ;¹ it has been

¹ Bunting, *Is Trade Unionism Sound?*

pressed upon the attention of Labour leaders by such independent thinkers as Dean Inge. It would, indeed, be infinitely better, as we have remarked above (§ 36), that trade unions should use their funds to embark in business on their own account, than that they should squander them on the destructive lunacy of the Class War. The success of self-government in industry, however, demands for its realisation precisely that group of qualities which is connoted by the term "capitalism": that is to say, it requires the honest recognition of rights of property; the raising of money by the well-established methods of sound finance and the due payment of the current interest thereon; the appointment of capable managers at salaries sufficient to attract the rather rare talent necessary; the disciplined obedience of the rank and file; and the diligent devotion of all to the great task of production. These qualities are exactly those which are most lacking in "Guild Socialists," and it is therefore not astonishing that their experiments in self-governing industry, like those of the Christian Socialists before them, have proved to be pathetic and ludicrous fiascos.¹ It is appalling to think what would be the fate of the great staple industries of the country if they were to pass into the control of such quarrelsome and intractable cranks.

The most ambitious and extensive of the "Guild Socialist" attempts to display to an admiring world the superiority over Capitalist industry of industry run without capital, without wages, without discipline, without energy, and without intelligence, was

¹ "Punctuality, regularity, discipline, industry," says Mr. G. D. H. Cole, "are a set of slave virtues" (*University Correspondent*, Report of an Education Guild Conference, January 1922). We can well imagine, therefore, the condition of a factory in which Mr. Cole's ideal of freedom prevails!

that of the Building Guild established 1920, reconstituted 1921, and bankrupt 1922. Details of its organisation and activities, while still it was in being, will be found in the sympathetic pages of W. A. Orton's *Labour in Transition* (198-204) and N. Carpenter's *Guild Socialism* (118-125 and Appendix I.). After it had come to its inevitable end, the *Guild Socialist*, the organ of its disillusioned promoters, which for two years had been proclaiming its glories and its achievements, very frankly and furiously examined and exposed the causes of its collapse (December 1922). Apart from the fact that—even with State subsidies and advances from the Co-operative Wholesale Society—sufficient capital could not be raised without the payment of adequate interest, and without adequate guarantee of security; apart from this fundamental and inherent defect, the Building Guild collapsed because of the failure of its human elements. It was wrecked by (1) *laziness*: “In one case a Guild Committee, barely begun on a public contract, authorised a full week's pay for the men to attend a local race-meeting”; (2) *incompetence*: “There has been an absence of technical knowledge due sometimes to the mere chance that the wrong men have been elected, sometimes to the simple fact that no competent man was available”; (3) *quarrelsomeness*: “In one district, competent and incompetent were mercilessly swallowed up in a series of personal vendettas which literally drew tears from a friendly observer”; (4) *indiscipline*: “The local men are afraid to speak frankly to, or about, their daily associates.”¹ No more decisive vindication of the comparative soundness of the “Capitalist System”

¹ *Guild Socialist*, December 1922.

could be desired than this *Guild Socialist* lament over the humiliating failure of this test experiment in applied anti-Capitalism—an experiment which was undertaken and carried through to its disastrous end in circumstances peculiarly favourable to success. Houses were urgently wanted ; limitless work was available ; Government subsidies and municipal loans provided large and secure funds ; the Co-operative Societies were lavishly generous and helpful ; countless private enthusiasts rendered every possible assistance—yet the scheme collapsed in two years ; wrecked on the fallacious principles of its formulators and on the defective characters of its exponents. “ Guild Socialism,” in so far as it is not Syndicalist tyranny, is industrial anarchy.

§ 56. *The Approaches to Anarchism.*

It is curious how all the more extreme forms of Socialism, Syndicalism, and Guildism move in the direction of Anarchic Individualism. The logical process would seem to be as follows. The Socialist, aiming at the expropriation of the landlord and the capitalist, looks to the State as the main instrument of his scheme of spoliation, and devotes his energies to the capture of political power. After a time the younger and wilder Socialists, on the one hand, disgusted at the slowness of the political process, and eager for a speedy appropriation of the anticipated booty, and, on the other hand, alarmed at the prospects of the stern restraint and rigid discipline which a system of nationalised industry would involve, break away in open revolt and proclaim themselves Syndicalists. They repudiate the State ; denounce the bureau-

cracy beloved of the Fabians ; reject the control of the democratic electorate ; abandon political action. Mr. G. D. H. Cole (who passed through a Syndicalist phase on his transit from Collectivism to Guildism) voices their sentiments when (with the engaging frankness characteristic of the controversialists of Revolutionary sectarianism) he says of the Socialist comrades whom he has left behind : “ They may take their choice : they are knaves who hate freedom, or they are fools who do not know what freedom means.”¹ Syndicalism, then, is a cry for the freedom of the industrial group—the trade union, the guild, the association of producers—as against the grinding tyranny of the Socialist State regarded as an authoritarian organisation of consumers bent on oppressing the creative proletarians. The emancipated Syndicalists proclaim the gospel of “ Self-government in Industry ” ; they make the autonomy of the economic group the cardinal principle of their creed ; they denounce all extraneous control over the ways and the wills of the organised workers.

But *within* the economic group the Syndicalist establishes a despotism comparable only to that of the Spanish Inquisition at its height. He drives the working man into the industrial union by means of a violence which does not hesitate to go to the extremes of social boycott, financial ruin, and even personal mutilation.² When he has got him inside the union he coerces him with merciless ferocity into all the excesses which mark his conduct of the Class War :

¹ Cole, *Self-Government in Industry*, p. 231.

² The Bermondsey Borough Council (dominated by Labour) passed a by-law to the effect that “ men applying for relief work, not being members of a trade union, must within seven days join a union.” This by-law was fortunately disallowed by the State Committee (*Daily Chronicle*, November 22, 1923).

he compels him to come out on strike ; he forces him to adopt all the devilish devices which are intended to injure the employer and reduce output ; he deprives him of freedom of ballot ; he extorts his money for the support of causes about which he has never been consulted ; and—the last straw—he makes him contribute to the *Daily Herald*. Hence those who abandon State Socialism for Syndicalism, thinking that (in Mr. Bertrand Russell's phrase) they have discovered a "road to freedom," are in the precise position of the deluded flat-fish which jumps out of the frying-pan into the fire. For, as I have before remarked, of all the tyrannies which this earth has known, the Syndicalist tyranny is one of the grossest, most cruel, and least intelligent.

Hence the disillusioned Syndicalist, if he really desires liberty, has to seek emancipation from the despotism of the group, as before he sought emancipation from the pervasive bureaucracy of the Socialist State. Unless he is sane enough to retrace his steps to his pre-Socialist starting-point, he tends to go forward into Anarchism. For Anarchism in its essence is an unqualified assertion of the complete freedom of the individual as against all external authorities whatsoever. It recognises no other valid control than those of the personal reason, conscience, and will. It repudiates the State ; it rejects all Churches ; it acknowledges no Groups ; it refuses to swear oaths or enter into contracts ; it denies the obligation both of positive law and conventional morality ; it denounces marriage, the institution of the family, parental authority, and all permanent ties. The Anarchist stands solitary at the icy pole of administrative nihilism.

§ 57. *The Anarchist Idea.*

Solitary : yet not without comrades. As Christian eremites, each in his lonely cell, peopled the Theban desert in the days of old, so—but without the comfort of the sun divine, and without the warm radiance of religious zeal—does a not inconsiderable company of incompatibles and unsociables, each isolated on his frozen pinnacle, cluster round the axis of Anarchism. They form a strange assembly of eccentrics and unfortunates, who by many and various routes of airy theory or of troublous voyage have reached this Arctic goal. Beside disillusioned Syndicalists fleeing from the tyranny of their industrial groups, there are many Individualists who have been impelled to this logical conclusion of their creed by resentment at State interference, revolt against ecclesiastical intolerance, disgust with social conventionality, distaste for the restrictive organisation of modern community, resistance to the repressive claims of fellowship and faith. There can, indeed, be no doubt that Society as at present constituted—over-crowded, over-elaborated, over-governed—outrages those primitive instincts of the normal man which demand solitude as well as community, privacy as well as corporate activity, freedom as well as organisation, the negative liberty of absence of restraint as well as the positive liberty of law. Hence, in part, the widespread and varied rebellion against civilisation.

Here, for example, at or near the pole of Anarchism, are to be found men so dissimilar as William Godwin, the ex-Calvinist minister, who moved rapidly through the whole gamut of political possibilities from Toryism to extreme individualist Radicalism, and thence

passed to a Nihilism which denied all authority whatsoever; Percy Bysshe Shelley, the revolutionary aristocrat, who, following Godwin, sought in free thought and free love to attain to ecstasy of the skylark; Pierre Joseph Proudhon, the Burgundian compositor, who proclaimed that "the government of men by men, under whatever name it may be concealed, is servitude," and that "the highest consummation of society is found in the union of order and anarchy";¹ Max Stirner, the modest school teacher of Baireuth and Berlin, who exalted the idea of personality to such a height that its ascendancy required the suppression of all conflicting conceptions, and the repudiation of all extraneous loyalties; Herbert Spencer, the evolutionist who mistook himself for a philosopher, whose championship of Man *versus* the State, and whose defence of the rights of liberty and property against all comers, went to the semi-anarchic length of reducing the functions of government to those of a night-watchman; Friedrich Nietzsche, the hater of the common herd and their slave superstitions, who demanded that, no matter what happened to the worthless mob, his Supermen at any rate should be free from all restriction and control—at liberty to "take their licence in the field of time, unchecked by any sense of crime"; Leo Tolstoi, the unbalanced and erratic genius, who dreamed that the weltering multitudes of men, regardless of race and creed, and irrespective of culture or character, could be left to organise themselves spontaneously on the lines of a Holy Family; Peter Kropotkin, the mild and dreamy lover of cats, who believed that tigers could be domesticated by the

¹ Proudhon, quoted Zenker, *Anarchism*, p. 66.

simple device of a milk diet, constant kindness, and the appellation "Poor pussy"; Edward Carpenter, the uncertificated specialist on the cause and cure of civilisation, who seemed to suppose that mankind needs for its guidance and control nothing except muddled thought and muddy sentiment.

Such are some of the notable types of eccentricity which are represented in the Arctic regions of Anarchism—at or near the pole. No two of them are alike; for to agree with any one else would be regarded by the complete Libertine as an evidence of undue subjection to common sense. Few are wholly self-consistent: they tend to desire more freedom for themselves than they are prepared to concede to others. All, however, are sufficiently opposed to both secular and ecclesiastical authority to warrant their being classed as Anarchists.¹

§ 58. *The Two Schools of Anarchism.*

It will have been noticed that the Anarchism referred to in the previous section is of an exceedingly mild and inoffensive kind. It is simply an appeal on the part of a variety of innocent and harmless Individualists to be left alone. They do not want to be ordered about by policemen, catechised by priests, dictated to by trade-union officials, mulcted by tax-gatherers, scrutinised by inspectors, or (in extreme cases) henpecked by wives, and recognised by children. They, on their side, profess to have no desire at all to

¹ The most doubtful, of course, is Herbert Spencer. Zenker refuses to allow that he can be properly called an Anarchist. But, on the contrary, R. B. Tucker, the leading American exponent of Anarchism, expressly claims him as a master; and the French Anarchist, Vaillant, at his trial in 1893, defended himself by an appeal to Spencer's principles, and professed himself Spencer's disciple.

exercise authority over others: their motto is "Live and let live," occasionally supplemented by "Love and let love."

This passive or negative type of Anarchism, however, is by no means the only one existent in our midst to-day. It is not, indeed, the type with which we are most familiar. There is another type, a militant and positive Anarchism, which (though it violates its own fundamental principles) tends, by the terror which it creates, to monopolise the attention of the world. It is the Anarchism of dynamite, dagger, and bomb. The Russian Bakunin is its most notorious apostle.

Bakunin, like his gentle and amiable compatriots Tolstoi and Kropotkin, seeks emancipation from the authority of Church, State, and all other extraneous power; but, unlike Tolstoi and Kropotkin, he is not content merely to be let alone. He is not willing to allow those who desire to retain Church and State—even though they be the overwhelming majority of mankind—to continue to do so. While repudiating any constraint upon his own will, he is resolved by means of the extremest compulsion to impose his will on others. He is out to destroy both Church and State, and if necessary all who endeavour to defend them. "The Anarchist," says the *Revolutionary Catechism* which embodies his terrible creed, "has only one aim, one object of study, viz. destruction; for that and that alone he makes researches in mechanics, physics, chemistry, and medicine. He observes with the same object the men, the characters, the grades, and the conditions of the social order. He despises and hates existing morality. For him everything is moral that favours the triumph of the

revolution. Between him and society there is war to the death, incessant, irreconcilable. He ought to be ready to kill with his own hand all who obstruct the revolution—and himself be prepared in the cause of the revolution to suffer torture or to die.” Not the liberty of the individual but the destruction of society is the aim and object of this perverted and horrible form of Anarchism.

Now, just as *reaction against* Syndicalism, because of its cruelty and tyranny, leads to the libertarian or Individualistic Anarchism of Tolstoi, so does *disgust with* Syndicalism, because of its failure and inefficiency, lead to the destructive or Communistic Anarchism of Bakunin. The violence of the general strike having proved inadequate, increase the dose! Proletarians, learn the use of dynamite! “It is undeniable,” says Antonelli, “that between Syndicalism and Anarchism there is a very close relationship.”¹ Some of the leading French Syndicalists, indeed, *e.g.* Pelloutier and Pouget, were avowed Anarchists of the Bakunin or bomb-throwing school. How easily Syndicalism, with its general strike and its violent sabotage, slides into mere destructive Anarchism, is clearly seen from a manifesto discovered in New York in November 1919. It runs: “We must consciously hasten the elementary movement of the struggle of the general working classes. We must convert small strikes into general ones, and convert the latter into the armed revolt of the labouring masses against Capital and the State. At the time of this revolt we must, at the first favourable opportunity, proceed to the immediate seizure of all

¹ Antonelli, L., *La Démocratie sociale*, p. 45. Cf. also G. D. H. Cole, *World of Labour*, p. 91.

the means of production and articles of consumption, making the working class masters in fact of all general wealth. At the same time we must mercilessly destroy all that remains of Government authority. . . . In the work of destruction we must be merciless ; for the slightest weakness upon our part may afterwards cost the working class a whole sea of needless blood. . . . Throw away your slavish respect for the law ; take everything you need. . . . Whoever shall hinder you, remove him from your path as the foe of your freedom. . . . Not to the happiness of citizenship do we call the workers. We call them to liberty, to absolute liberty. We are Anarchists ! ”¹

§ 59. *Anarchism in Practice.*

At first sight the two schools of Anarchism seem to lie poles apart ; there seems nothing in common between the quietism and passive resistance of Tolstoi and the wild fury of Bakunin and the bomb-throwers. What affinity can there be between the theorists who repudiate any employment of force, and the users of dynamite as a means of persuasion ? The affinity is a good deal closer than it ought to be. For, as a matter of fact, the force which the disciples of Tolstoi object to is force applied by others to themselves. They are by no means so strongly opposed to force applied by themselves to others, and their passive resistance soon transmutes itself into active resistance ; their active resistance into defensive aggression ; and their defensive aggression into the open assault of the storm-troops of Bakunin.

We saw the process at work during the War. The

¹ See more fully *The Times*, November 11, 1919.

“conscientious objector” professed the mildest Tolstoian pacificism: he could not bear to hurt anything, least of all a German; if a German hit him he would not hit back; if he saw a bully beating a woman he would do no more than argue with him, appealing to his higher nature, and so on. He objected *in toto* to the use of force. Pacificism, however, soon manifested militant qualities. First, with a sublime disregard of consistency, it appealed, when its meetings were broken up, to the protection of the police whom it denounced, and of the army in which it declined to serve. Then it became active itself, defied prison discipline, caused riots and tumults, sang *The Red Flag*, and finally clamoured for the declaration of the Class War! It soon ran through the gamut from Tolstoi to Bakunin. The mild gave place to the wild, and the leadership of the long-haired man was speedily superseded by that of the short-haired woman.

Behind the whole Revolutionary movement, in fact, is the Anarchic individualism of the primitive cave-dweller, which resents discipline of every kind, loathes the regularity of ordered society, detests systematic work, hates the restraint of law, repudiates all authority. It is this licentious Individualism which is at the back of all types of Anarchism. It is the mainspring of Syndicalism. Even Socialism—notwithstanding all its professions to the contrary—owes to it much of its vitality. For, as Mr. W. B. Faraday well says: “The present Socialist movement, illogically enough, derives most of its force from the constitutional objection of the bulk of its followers to all existing authority.”¹ A great deal of so-called “industrial unrest” is no more than the disinclination

¹ Faraday, *Democracy and Capital*, p. 178.

of the undisciplined underman to take orders from any one. It is a sheer revolt against civilisation.

The Socialist, of course, combines with his resistance to existing authority a determination to establish a new authority controlled by himself. But that merely illustrates another characteristic of the cave-men, the passion for domination. The Bolshevik not only resists the Tsardom and overthrows the Duma ; he proceeds to set up a despotism exceeding in cruelty that of Ivan the Terrible himself. The Syndicalist not only repudiates the State and defies the mandates of the law ; he proceeds to set up a tyranny of shop-stewards and workshop committees that rivals the councils of the Inquisition. The Anarchist not only demands complete freedom for his own activities ; he also proceeds by means of dynamite and bombs to reduce the rest of the community to the slavery of terror.

To what lengths the Anarchist will go is shown by the Geneva manifesto of 1882 : “ Anarchists—that is to say, men without chiefs—we fight against all who are invested or wish to invest themselves with any kind of power whatsoever. Our enemy is the landlord who owns the soil and makes the peasant drudge for his profit. Our enemy is the employer who owns the workshop and has filled it with wage-serfs. Our enemy is the State—monarchic, oligarchic, democratic, or proletarian—with its functionaries, and its services of offices, magistrates, and police. Our enemy is every abstract authority, whether called God or Devil, in the name of which priests have so long governed souls. Our enemy is the law, always made for the oppression of the weak by the strong, and for the justification and consecration of crime.”

§ 60. *The Revolutionary Ferment.*

All the three movements which we have been considering in this part of our work—Socialism, Syndicalism, and Anarchism—attempt to make an appeal to men of goodwill (on whose support they depend for success) by putting to the forefront of their programme principles which seem to be sound and noble. The Socialist advances the claim of the community over the individual, the rights of the many as against the privileges of the few, the advantages of co-operation as compared with the evils of competition, the pleasures of mutual aid as contrasted with the pains of social conflict, the efficiency and economy of collectivism *versus* the incompetence and extravagance of private enterprise. By doing so he wins the sanction and support of many worthy and respectable people, such as William Morris, Jerome K. Jerome, the Bishop of Lichfield, and the Countess of Warwick. The Syndicalist professes devotion to the cause of group autonomy, and so wins the approval of many ritualistic clergymen, like the late Father Figgis, and many heterodox nonconformists, like the Rev. Richard Roberts. They see in it a "Life and Liberty" movement similar to that which inspires their own revolt against constituted authority. So, again, the Anarchist comes forward as the champion of personal freedom, and so excites in the breasts of many ardent innocents a passionate enthusiasm such as moved the early Christians to suffer martyrdom.

All is camouflage. It is not love of community, or zeal for group autonomy, or devotion to individual liberty which is the effective power behind the fair features of these subversive cults. The motive forces

in all of them are the primitive self-regarding instincts of the aboriginal savage—impatience of control, resentment at superiority, love of domination, passion to possess the property of others, lust for loot. The Marxian theories of value and surplus value rivet their hold upon the emotions (not the minds) of their devotees, just because they profess to provide an elaborate justification for plunder: to refute them is useless; again and again they have been shown to be nonsense; their appeal has not been made to the intellect. The Syndicalist doctrine of the General Strike owes its vogue to the fact that it seems to render feasible an orgy of unpunishable theft. The Anarchist openly proclaims robbery as his creed. “Robbery,” says Bakunin, speaking to his own countrymen, “is one of the most honourable forms of Russian national life. The brigand is a hero; the defender, the popular avenger, the irreconcilable enemy of the State. . . . He who does not understand robbery can understand nothing in the history of the Russian masses. . . . It is through brigandage only that the vitality, passion, and force of the people are established. . . . The brigands scattered in the forests, the cities, and villages of all Russia, and the brigands confined in the innumerable prisons of the Empire, form a unique and indivisible world, strongly bound together, the world of the Russian Revolution.”¹ If Bakunin could but have lived to the present day he would behold his choice collection of criminal heroes, released from their innumerable prisons, and lording it over the prostrate millions of their unhappy victims.

To say that the motive power behind the Revolu-

¹ Bakunin, *Words addressed to Students*, quoted by F. R. Salter, *Karl Marx*, p. 211.

tionary movement is the predatory passion of the unregenerate primitive man, is not necessarily to condemn all Socialists, Syndicalists, and Anarchists as immoral. The present writer is fortunate enough to know many people belonging to one or another of the three groups, whose characters are above suspicion, and whose zeal for the good of humanity is beyond question. They err through excess of tenderheartedness; they are blinded by their sympathy with the sufferings of the submerged; they take the professions of Socialism, Syndicalism, and Anarchism too much on trust, not perceiving the evil that lurks behind. In spite of the fact, however, of their honest and noble faith, it is necessary to expose the horrid reality of their creeds and to make clear the peril of which they are innocently unaware.

But the mere exposure of error, though necessary, is an arid and thankless task. It is further needful to recognise that grave evils do exist, calling urgently for remedy; to show that rejection of the Revolutionary remedy does not imply indifference to suffering; and above all, to demonstrate that there is such a thing as a sound diagnosis and a rational course of cure. We turn from criticism to suggestion.

PART IV

THE TRUE WAY OF PROGRESS

"Individual character, energy, and inventiveness are the mainspring of human progress."—Professor RAMSAY MUIR.

"It is an indispensable part of the effective resistance to Jacobinism that there should be moderate reform."—Lord HUGH CECIL.

"When the hour of new things has struck, Catos, de Broglies, Eldons, bring the old cause to ruin. Rigid Conservatism is the bane of all revolutions."—Mr. FREDERIC HARRISON.

"The most efficient ally for the forces of revolution is a display of irresolution and timidity on the part of the Administration."—Sir ARTHUR CLAY.

"We have had our fill of hatreds, and the world is in ruins. Let us rebuild it by venturing somewhat for fellowship and fraternity."—The BISHOP OF DURHAM (Dr. HENSLEY HENSON).

"I am in revolt against the present all too pervading spirit of pessimism."—Viscount MILNER.

CHAPTER XI

POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS

"The State is for its members the society of societies, the society in which all their claims upon each other are mutually adjusted."—T. H. GREEN.

"It is in the life of the State, and only there, that human life can obtain the nourishment it needs for its appropriate expansion and development."—Professor SHELDON AMOS.

"The State includes the entire hierarchy of institutions by which life is determined, from the family to the trade, and from the trade to the Church and the University."—Professor BERNARD BOSANQUET.

"The end of the State is nothing short of the highest welfare of the individual and of humanity."—Professor W. S. M'KECHNIE.

"The State has a final moral value. It is the source and giver of all our rights."—Dr. ERNEST BARKER.

"It is the business of the State, and the end of politics, to create and to maintain the conditions without which a free exercise of the human faculties is impossible."—Professor RAMSAY MUIR.

§ 61. *What is Progress?*

THE movements described and condemned in the preceding part of this book are all called "progressive," and those who oppose them are dubbed "reactionary." The one appellation does not attract, nor does the other repel, any sensible person. What is called "progress" is often nothing more than ignorance in motion—one of the most deadly and dangerous things conceivable. Probably the most progressive movement recorded in history is that

which in a few moments rendered the name of Gadara for ever notorious. As to the term "reactionary," it is the epithet which the inmates of the padded rooms in mental hospitals commonly apply to their keepers and medical attendants. The real reactionaries are those who in their imperfect acquaintance with history and their excessive contempt for antiquity proclaim as new gospels the extinct fallacies which deluded the unhappy Chartists, or even the hoary absurdities which led astray the gaping followers of John Ball. It is these revivers of obsolete heresies—pre-Reformation Socialism; mediæval Guildism; Ancient Communism; Palæolithic Anarchism—who are the most formidable and obstructive enemies of genuine progress. Think of the time and energy that have been worse than wasted in trying to instil into eager and hopeful minds the old and oft-exploded errors of Karl Marx! Think of the infinite damage that has been done to the cause of advancing humanity by that reversion to the barbarism of Spartacus and the Roman slaves—the proclamation of the Class War! Think of the set-back to civilisation and the ruin of a great nation effected by the reactionary fanaticism of the Bolsheviks!

Progress is more than mere movement: it is movement in the right direction and towards an ideal end. It is more than mere change: it is evolutionary change—such change, that is to say, and only such, as is required to adapt a long-lived organism to a slowly-altering environment. Edmund Burke more clearly than any of his predecessors saw and expressed the twofold principle implicit in the idea of the organic nature of the State. On the one hand, he urged, as against the Tories, who opposed any and

every modification of the ancient constitution, the imperative need for the adaptation of the political organism to its shifting surroundings. On the other hand, he urged, as against the Radicals, who were eager to sweep away the old and start afresh, the imperative need to maintain the vital continuity of the body politic. "I would not exclude alteration," he said, "but even when I changed it should be to preserve." Continuity and adaptation—such is the twofold principle of progressive reform.

It need not be argued at length that this principle is very different from that of the Social Revolutionary. He has no reverence for the past; no respect for venerable tradition; no regard for the sentiments of those who cling with affection and with faith to "the old perfections of the earth." His passion is for destruction—for the dethronement of Kings, the suppression of aristocracies, the disestablishment of churches, the expropriation of landlords, the confiscation of capital, the abolition of everything. "Our task," concludes the *Revolutionary Catechism*, "is terrible, inexorable, and universal destruction."¹ From this follows the horrible consequence that the Revolutionary deliberately opposes reform lest it should postpone the final day of conflagration; and deliberately fosters and increases the misery of the masses in order that he may the more easily goad them to revolt. "Every effort," ran the Manifesto of the International of 1873, "is to be made to heighten and increase the evils and sorrows which will at length wear out the patience of the people and encourage an insurrection *en masse*."²

¹ Quoted Zenker, *Anarchism*, p. 138.

² Cf. Faraday, *Democracy and Capital*, p. 48: "Any successful attempt at amelioration they [the Revolutionaries] hail as a disaster to their cause."

In direct antagonism to the insensate fury of these reactionary destroyers, who would drag humanity back to the primeval barbarism and anarchic chaos of the jungle, the progressive reformer aims at three things, viz. first, the preservation of the treasures of the past; secondly, their adaptation to the needs of the present; and thirdly, the realisation of their possibilities in the future.

§ 62. *The Preservation of the Treasures of the Past.*

One of the most disgusting and discreditable features of the writings of the Revolutionaries is their extravagant defamation of the civilisation in the midst of which they live, and whose benefits they enjoy. Even educated and comparatively moderate Socialists like the Webbs, the Hammonds, and Mr. R. H. Tawney show profound ingratitude and do incalculable harm by their distorted and prejudiced descriptions of what they call Capitalist Society. The Webbs, in their *Decay of Capitalist Civilisation*, though—a sign of grace!—they admit that capitalism worked well during the precise period when Karl Marx was denouncing it most vehemently, have hardly a good word to say for it in respect of the period during which Fabianism has been sapping at its foundations; yet it has, in spite of Fabian sapping, achieved unparalleled triumphs in scientific industry, and has immensely improved the lot of the bulk of the labouring class, falsifying all the predictions of the Communist Manifesto. The Hammonds, again, in their well-written works on *The Town Labourer* and *The Village Labourer*, draw misleading pictures of almost unrelieved gloom; on the one hand, ignoring the

brighter features, of which there were many, and on the other hand, attributing the sufferings of the poor too much to the wickedness of other people, and not enough to their own vices and follies—*e.g.* their excessive over-breeding. Similarly, Mr. Tawney's *Acquisitive Society*, though containing much that is fine in sentiment, and still more that is excellently expressed, is a book of evil tendency by reason of its gross over-emphasis upon the defects of our present civilisation; its baseless assumption that "something more drastic than reform" is needed to remove them; and its blind depreciation of the treasures of the past.

It is true that our present civilisation, like all things human, is not without defects. Many of them are of a grave order, calling for much searching of conscience, much earnest and sustained consideration, much active and self-sacrificing reform. But the deep causes of its sufferings and sorrows are moral and religious, rather than political and economic. In so far, however, as they are aggravated by political and economic factors, no small part of the blame is to be assigned to the Socialist agitators themselves—not excluding the Webbs, the Hammonds, and Mr. Tawney. Their constant iteration of the cry "Our present capitalist civilisation is dissolving before our eyes"¹ is one of those psychological suggestions which tend to realise themselves, and so in this case to dissolve capitalist civilisation; their incessant interference with its operations is one of the main causes why in some cases it does not function well. It is sincerely to be hoped that before they carry their subversive propaganda farther, they will pause

¹ Webb, *op. cit.* p. 1.

to ponder the merits as well as the defects of the social and constitutional order in which they live, and will try to estimate not only the virtues of the shadowy Utopias which they frame for the future, but also the substantial value of the treasures which they actually inherit from the past.

What are these treasures of the past ? We may distinguish, on the one side, the wealth of the common heritage of the Western World, the civilisation of the White Man in general ; on the other side, the riches peculiar to the highly favoured peoples of Britain and the Empire. (1) Common to the Western World are the advantages of community ; the security that is conferred by government and the liberty which is created by law ; the control over the resources of nature established by science ; the comforts procurable by commerce ; the rich adornments of life due to the development of art ; the boundless treasures of language, literature, and music ; the lofty speculations of philosophy and religion. Our Western Civilisation is the highest which the world has ever known ; and the potential heritage of every person born into it is of an inestimable worth. (2) Beside this common possession, however, the citizen of Great Britain has no small number of peculiar gifts. He becomes the member of a community glorious in its history and traditions, marked by an old and fine consciousness of national unity ; distinguished by a lofty and noble patriotism ; pre-eminent for its harmonisation of order and liberty ; endowed with a constitution remarkable for its flexibility and efficiency ; enriched by a large and tolerant piety ; and encircled by a marvellous company of democratic daughter-commonwealths. The hope of the human .

race rests not in Socialist Utopias, or Syndicalist Bedlams, or Anarchist Pandemonia ; but in the preservation of Western Civilisation, and in the development of such polities as that of the British Empire.

§ 63. *The British Constitution.*

Of all the treasures of the past most worthy of preservation of the peoples of this island is the Constitution under which they are governed. In a manner unexampled throughout the world's history the political genius of the British peoples has developed a form of administration which combines in exquisite proportion the principles of authority and liberty. Government has in Britain been sublimated into self-government—the happy mean between the despotism of Oriental monarchies and the lawlessness of South American republics. The problem of how in a large community to ascertain what is the public opinion and what the general will has been solved almost as nearly as it is likely to be among men. It is impossible for any measure to become law, or, if already on the statute-book, to remain law, if it seriously offends any widespread sentiment. A mode of constitutional procedure has been devised—based on a comprehensive electorate and culminating in a representative Parliament—which enables the most radical revolutions, both in personnel and in policy, to be effected without bloodshed, by the counting of heads instead of the breaking of them, by the ballot-box in place of the barricade.

Circumstances have been peculiarly propitious to the British peoples in the development of their polity. Their insular position, which has given them long

immunity from external molestation, has enabled them to make experiments and effect innovations that would have been impossible to a Continental people: neither Henry VIII.'s religious changes nor Oliver Cromwell's political transformations could have been carried through except behind the barrier of the English Channel and under the protection of the English Fleet. Then, again, the British people are drawn from virile stocks, Mediterranean and Nordic, and the climate of their country, although it rarely calls forth their gratitude or praise, is excellently fitted to stimulate their energies and quicken their manlier powers: it is not enervating like the climate of the tropics; it is not depressing like the climate of the inhospitable North; it both elicits and rewards exertion.

Thus sheltered and fostered, the British Constitution has been of slow and natural growth. Its first great achievement was to establish a strong monarchical central government, under a King who was at one and the same time the chief of the people, the lord of the land, and the anointed of the Church. This autocratic centralisation was necessary in order to put an end to lawlessness, tribalism, sectionalism, feudalism, localism, and all the other mediaeval influences which prevented the integration of the nation. No sooner, however, had national unity been attained, the reign of law secured, and an effective central authority enthroned, than a new process commenced. This was a process, not of depriving the King of his powers and prerogatives, but of providing constitutional and responsible channels through which alone he should exercise these powers and prerogatives: he should legislate only in Parliament; he should administer only in Council; he should judge only in

Court; he should invariably act through ministers whose amenability to control and punishment should mitigate the peril to liberty which the monarch's omnipotence entailed. By gradual stages, while the theory of legal sovereignty remained unchanged, political sovereignty was slowly shifted until at the present moment it resides in the community-as-a-whole, acting through a representative electorate of some twenty million voters.

One consequence of the fact that vast internal changes in our Constitution have been effected with singularly little alteration in structure and appearance, is that the Constitution has acquired a remarkable degree of flexibility and adaptability. It retains organs and instruments suited to almost every conceivable stage of political evolution, and it has developed the power of creating new organs and instruments as new circumstances arise. Very fresh in our memories still are the examples of the War Cabinet and the numerous administrative extemporisations which the exigences of the great struggle called into existence. Not least among the factors which before the end of the war established the clear superiority of British democracy over German autocracy was the readiness with which the Constitution could accommodate itself, without the shock of revolution, to each new emergency as it arose. It displayed in a marked degree the virtues of stability and the virtues of adaptability.

§ 64. *Changing Circumstances.*

In the rapidly changing circumstances of the present day are there any large portions of our

Constitution which we could with advantage dispense with, or (to use the favourite word of the Social Revolutionary) "abolish" ?

First and foremost, what of the Monarchy ? Why, when America is wholly republican, and when the old-established thrones of Europe and Asia are tottering and falling on all sides, should we not follow the advice of Mr. H. G. Wells and convert our hereditary Monarchy into an elective Presidency ? There are many reasons why we should not do so, or try to do so. The strongest reason is that we could not do so, however much we should try, and that we should cause an immense and unnecessary turmoil by the effort. The Monarchy, one of the most ancient and most noble in the world, rich in traditions that go back to the remote beginnings of the Saxon race, is so deeply seated in the affections and loyalty of the British people that to attempt even to diminish its status would be to provoke an outburst of indignation that would warn any persons except the pundits of the *Daily Herald* of the folly of the proposal. But the Monarchy is not merely based upon the instinctive and traditional loyalty of the British peoples, it also justifies itself to their political judgement by the valuable functions which it still performs. (1) In domestic affairs, the Monarchy lends a dignity, a sanctity, and a continuity to government wholly lacking in the administrations of ephemeral and partisan Presidents ; it softens and facilitates changes of ministry ; it moderates and mollifies party animosities ; it humanises and popularises law ; it provides a score of useful means of escape from constitutional deadlocks ; above all, it severs Society from politics and so prevents the struggle for power in the State from becoming

complicated with a personal conflict for pre-eminence in the larger world outside. (2) In foreign affairs, the Monarchy often renders inestimable service to responsible ministers by preparing the way socially for political ententes, and by conveying informally and confidentially to the right quarters information and opinions which if conveyed formally to foreign ministers might cause trouble: examples crowd to one's memory, but lack of space precludes their enumeration. (3) In imperial affairs, the Monarchy is of pre-eminent importance. The King is of all the links of Empire the most powerful. It is to him that the princes of India own allegiance; it is from him that the great autonomous Dominions receive their governors, and to him that they accredit their representatives; it is his navy that defends them, and to his army that in times of common peril they send their willing contingents. It is not too much to say that the very existence of the British Empire is bound up with the continuance of the Monarchy.

If, however, the Monarchy justifies itself even on utilitarian grounds, what of the House of Lords? The Social Revolutionary assails the Second Chamber with almost more virulence than he attacks the Kingship: it is indeed a most serious obstacle to his designs. He tends indeed to oppose Second Chambers of all sorts, however composed, and to favour a uni-cameral constitution, such as existed at Athens, amenable to every breath of popular passion. The sovereign democracy in this country—as in nearly every other country—does not agree with the Social Revolutionary. On the contrary, it feels, with Sir Henry Maine, that “almost any second chamber is better than none,” because it realises with Sir Sidney

Low, that "there would be scarcely a limit to the mischief a demoralised collection of self-seeking and ambitious groups might not do, if there were no second chamber to compel reflection and reconsideration." As a matter of fact, the British Constitution has been built up on the assumption that there is a Second Chamber in existence to share responsibility with the First. Hence the absence of those fundamental laws, unchangeable by the ordinary process of legislation, that loom so large in the republican constitutions of America and France. On the whole, the House of Lords admirably performs the suspensory and revisionary functions which have been left to it under the Parliament Act of 1912.¹ If reform is needed, it is needed in only two minor directions: first, in arrangements for the exclusion of incompetent or unworthy peers; secondly, in provision for the inclusion of representatives of several of the great interests, beside land and money, which have come into prominence in the modern world.

What, finally, of the House of Commons?

§ 65. *The House of Commons.*

The House of Commons, from small beginnings in the thirteenth century, has during its course of some seven centuries worked itself up to a position of legislative supremacy in the State. At first, as representative of the organised *communitates* of shires and

¹ From 1906 to 1912, in face of the enormous Liberal and Labour majority in the House of Commons, the House of Lords failed to function through fear. From 1912 to 1918, under the Parliament Act, it functioned imperfectly because of inexperience of its new limitations. Since 1918 it has recovered its courage and its prestige, and has done valuable work. The Lords' debates have frequently been far more educative than those of the caucus-bound Commons.

boroughs, it acted merely as a stimulus or a check to the legislative activity of King and Lords. But gradually its power over the purse extended its authority, until ultimately it became the dominant partner in the tripartite legislature. Further, whereas at the outset of its career it concerned itself with only a limited number of subjects respecting which the King specifically consulted it, gradually it enlarged its competence, until finally the whole gamut of affairs came within its purview.

At the present time the House of Commons labours heavily under the immense burden of the tasks which fall to its lot. It is in the last resort responsible for the well-being of more than one-fifth of the human race, and the extent of the British Empire, within which it is the supreme power, includes not far short of one-fourth of the land area of the globe. It may well be that some large scheme of devolution should be framed to relieve it of much of its detailed business. More extensive powers might perhaps be conceded to borough and county councils ; these local authorities might conceivably, for many purposes, be grouped into new regional units with representative assemblies competent to deal with problems limited in scope to their respective regions ; and further, local devolution might, with possible advantage, be supplemented by functional devolution, and such bodies as churches, universities, great commercial corporations, and trade unions, might be encouraged, as delegations of the State, to exercise a wide autonomy. There must, however, be no uncertainty on one point. The State must remain supreme over all persons and in all causes. Whatever authority may be allowed to local or functional groups, it is an authority derived from

the sovereign people—that is, from the community-as-a-whole, exercising its supremacy primarily through the electorate, secondly through the House of Commons, and immediately through the complete tripartite Parliament. Any division of ultimate sovereignty, such as the Guild Socialists urge, is a logical absurdity. Any attempt to shift the seat of ultimate sovereignty from the State to a composite body consisting of political, economic, and ecclesiastical elements—which is what the Guild Socialists really want to do—would lead to incalculable confusion and conflict. The House of Commons must retain its final omni-competence as the agent of the people as a whole.

That being the case, the question of the mode of election to this all-important assembly becomes a question of the greatest moment. First, it would appear that in order that the House of Commons may most fully represent the community-as-a-whole, the franchise should be extended to all who are capable of exercising it for the public good. As we have before remarked, the vote is not so much a private right as a public function ; so that no one can advance a valid claim to the vote except on the ground that he or she is able and willing to render service to the community. At the present moment it would seem that women between the ages of twenty-one and thirty fulfil this requirement. It appears, therefore, desirable that the qualifications for male and female franchise should be made the same. Secondly, equity demands that votes throughout the country should have approximately equal values : it is not fair that one thousand electors should return a member in one place, and that forty thousand should do no more in

another place. This approximate equality can be secured in two different ways. One is by periodical re-arrangements of the constituencies—the method adopted in all the Redistribution Acts of the nineteenth century. It has the grave defect that it prevents the constituencies from acquiring any organic character and consciousness: they become mere congeries of isolated voters. The other is to take as the basis of representation the actual existing, living, and self-conscious local units—boroughs, cities, ridings, counties—however various their sizes, and periodically proportion the number of members they return to their population. This would seem to be the better way by means of which to bring the strength of the local *communitates*, as in the old days, to the support of the national parliament.

§ 66. *The “ Three-Party ” Problem.*

By whatever means, however, members are elected to the House of Commons, when they get there it is essential that they should group themselves into two and no more than two parties. There must be His Majesty's Government based on the larger of the two, and His Majesty's Opposition based on the smaller, and using all its wits and its energies to win sufficient support in Parliament and Country to secure majority and power. Under any other conditions Parliamentary Government does not work well. Says Professor Ramsay Muir, with irresistible force, “ It is when the great parties break into shifting groups, not pledged to steady support of Government, or to persistent opposition, and therefore capable of being tempted by the promise of gain, that corrupt bargaining

will begin to appear.”¹ It is true that Professor Ramsay Muir has lately—in his *Politics and Progress*—become, as a Liberal politician struggling to find an excuse for the continued existence of his group, an advocate of a permanent triangle of parties, but I immensely prefer the opinion of Professor Muir the historian to that of Mr. Muir, M.P.

If we continue to have three fairly equal parties in the House of Commons, we shall find ourselves in a constant condition of deadlock; perpetually threatened with ministerial defeats and parliamentary dissolutions; impotent to carry through any decisive policy; our rulers compelled to devote all their energies to the mere art and craft of retaining office by clever manœuvring and astute bargaining. It is an intolerable prospect, fraught with the gravest possibilities of humiliation to Parliament, discredit to constitutional government, and disaster to Britain and the Empire. It is too much, I fear, to expect the active members of any of the three parties to recognise their duties and responsibilities in this matter. The love of life, of independence, of office, of power is too strong to allow cool wisdom to prevail. It will remain for the constituencies to decide that they will not permit the existence of the triangle, by refusing to vote for any one who is not clearly on one side or the other of the great issue of the day.

What that issue is can hardly be a matter of dispute? The main purpose of this book has been to make it clear. It is the issue of Socialism *versus* Liberty—an issue which goes to the very root of civic life, and affects the treatment of every question of domestic, foreign, and imperial politics. Nothing

¹ Muir, *Peers and Bureaucrats*, p. 46.

should be allowed to obscure this issue : it is an issue that admits of no compromise, it is one that transcends all others in importance.

What, then, should be the alignment of parties in respect of this issue ? It has already been indicated ¹ that the line of cleavage runs through Liberalism. It is the duty and the destiny of the once-great Liberal party, now that it has lost its hold upon the working classes, to become permanently divided into two sections : the left allying itself with, and ultimately losing itself in, the Socialist Labour Party ; the right doing the same with respect to Conservatism. Its disappearance as a separate entity will be, if it makes it willingly and gracefully, a noble sacrifice for the good of the nation, not unlike that which the Kingdom of Savoy made when she merged her identity in the Kingdom of Italy, and surrendered her territory to secure Italian unity. This schism of Liberalism—which is a fact not to be concealed by any temporary reconciliations—and these fusions with Socialism on the one side and Conservatism on the other, will not be without their compensations. It is the mission of Liberalism to-day to leaven Labour with moderation and to impart motion to Conservatism. Before the left wing of Liberalism can be fully absorbed into Labour, Labour will have been compelled to abandon some of its more extreme follies (such as the capital levy) and to have come to a frame of mind compatible with the responsible administration of the British Empire. And before the right wing of Liberalism can be fully incorporated into Conservatism it will be necessary for Conservatism to shed its more reactionary prejudices, to

¹ Above, § 22.

shake off the incubus of the Die-hards ; and above all to free itself from its obsession for Tariff Reform—the Socialism of the capitalist class—which has not only been the cause of all its worst disasters during the last twenty years, but which is entirely contrary to its libertarian genius.

The watchword of the reconstituted Anti-Socialist (or Liberal and Unionist) party would be the defence and extension of (1) Liberty—*i.e.* freedom of thought, of speech, of vote, of labour, of commerce, of enterprise ; (2) Equality of Opportunity, as against the Socialist Equality of Reward ; (3) Private Property and Private Enterprise ; (4) Public Order ; (5) Law ; (6) Religion and Morality.

CHAPTER XII

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

"It is exasperating to see the whole road to progress blocked by that dreary citadel of sham learning and false discussion, the Socialist Theory."—Mr. W. B. FARADAY.

"Both labour and industry must be protected against Socialist agitation, which threatens to ruin not only the existing order but also every attempt to improve it and to ensure social progress and general prosperity."—Mr. B. L. BRASOL.

"It is not to subversive doctrines imported from abroad, but to moral forces of native growth that we should look for the building up of a better social order."—Viscount MILNER.

"Capitalism is not a system but a practice. If it were destroyed one day, it would reconstitute itself the next, as it rests on the right of every individual to possess private property."—Mr. JOHN COLLIE.

"Social health demands not a restriction of private enterprise, but an immense expansion of it."—Professor RAMSAY MUIR.

"It is probable that the present age will witness the final discredit of those theories of politics and industry which are embodied in the word *Socialism*."—Mr. AUSTIN HOPKINSON.

§ 67. *The Conditions of Progress.*

IN the last chapter we have dealt with the political and constitutional conditions of progress. The general conclusion at which we have arrived is that in the main they exist in this country; in other words, that the British Constitution is so admirable a form of government that it demands preservation rather than alteration. On the one hand, procedure in Parliament has been so finely elaborated by centuries of

experience that the difficult but necessary business of legislation by discussion and vote can be transacted with the maximum of efficiency and rapidity. On the other hand, the electoral system, by means of which Parliament is made to represent the prevailing opinions of the community as a whole, though less mature and perfect than the system of Parliamentary procedure, in the main works well—at any rate when the normal and healthy two-party division of politicians prevails. No strong and steady current of public opinion can long continue to exist without exercising its due influence upon legislation and administration.

No radical change in the British Constitution is required. In particular, neither Proportional Representation nor the Referendum is a desirable addition. Proportional Representation—the pet hobby of the sectarian, the sectionalist, the crank, the man of one idea, and of all who cannot get the great parties to adopt their crazes—would greatly complicate the electoral process, bewilder the voters, encourage jugglery, disintegrate parties, and tend to fill Parliament with intractable groups of irreconcilable monomaniacs, skilled only in the disreputable art of log-rolling. The Referendum—the last refuge of the panic-stricken Tory Democrat—is undesirable because, first, it would lessen the dignity and responsibility of Parliament, and because, secondly, it would throw upon the electorate a burden of direct decision on detailed matters of legislation which it is not competent to bear. The utmost which the vast electorate can be asked to do in normal times is to decide on general lines of policy and to choose responsible representatives to carry them out. I say in normal

times, because *if* the two-party system cannot be reconstituted, and *if* Parliament becomes divided into, first, three parties and, secondly (as would be the inevitable sequel), into a fluctuating number of particularist groups, the electorate *may* have to demand the Referendum as the only means whereby it can escape the imposition, at the hands of a composite majority, of a varied assortment of their undesirable nostrums. For the electorate, by means of the Referendum, can be trusted to reject almost anything involving any considerable change, whether bad or good. Let us devoutly hope, however, that this state of things will never come to pass. For a log-rolling system of revolutionary groups held in check by a reactionary Referendum would mean that Parliamentary Government had definitely broken down, and that the bewildered community was simply marking time until it could discover some other method of ascertaining and expressing the general will.

It is important that these matters of constitution and procedure should be settled and laid to rest ; for, after all, they are merely adjectival. The Constitution is only the machinery by means of which the community gives effect to its opinions and wishes. Time spent in tinkering with the Constitution, except when it is absolutely necessary to adapt it to new circumstances, is time worse than wasted. For it not only distracts attention from matters of substantive importance ; it also delays progress by causing new uncertainties in the working of the governmental machine, and so necessitating slow and cautious manipulation.

Among matters of substantive importance urgently

calling for consideration are many economic and social problems, to which we must now turn.

§ 68. *The Harmonisation of Capital and Labour.*

The first step in economic and social progress has, however, to be taken not by politicians but by industrialists themselves. It is the bringing to an end the fratricidal conflict between Capital and Labour; the suspension of the insane Class War; the renewal of cordial co-operation among all engaged in production, with a view to securing the largest and cheapest product possible.

To an outside observer it is difficult to conceive how it ever became possible to make men believe that the interests of Capital and Labour are opposed to one another. Each so obviously needs the other; each so evidently contributes an indispensable element to production; each so patently earns and merits its reward, whether as dividend or wages. There is nothing wrong with the "Capitalist System." Whatever defects exist in the world of industry to-day are due, not to any "system," but rather to the personal faults and failings of those who represent Capital and Labour respectively. The term "Capitalist System," in fact, is simply a misnomer for that most healthy and happy condition in which freedom of enterprise prevails—where genius is free to make and develop inventions; where thrifty economisers are free to invest their savings in undertakings which promise profit; where labour is free to move to places or employments in which wages seem likely to be highest and opportunity largest. It is under the "Capitalist System" of economic freedom that wealth most increases, that

the public is best served, and that poverty and unemployment tend most rapidly to decrease. Most of our industrial troubles are due, not to the "Capitalist System," but to interferences with it; that is to say, to needless restrictions of economic freedom; to vexatious governmental regulations; to tariffs and bounties; to trusts and combines which crush competition and establish monopoly; to trade union tyrannies. Nothing is more urgently necessary to-day in the interests of economic and social progress than the restoration of lost liberty to both Capital and Labour, so that each may secure the largest possible return for its services. The primary function of the Government should be to see to it that no reward is secured by either Capital or Labour except in respect of services honestly rendered. But so long as service and reward are inseparably linked, the larger the number of millionaires the better.

Capital and Labour are indispensable partners in industry. How is it, then, that they have become estranged and hostile to one another? Their lamentable and absurd alienation is due partly to personal defects in both employers (regarded as representative of Capital) and employed (regarded as representative of Labour), and partly to a false theoretical separation between the two. Employers of labour have too often shown a hardness and lack of humanity in dealing with their workpeople; have failed in their personal relations with them; have been careless of the conditions of their toil; have resisted their reasonable requests; have maintained an irritating secrecy as to the prosperity or otherwise of their business; have refused to concede any share in workshop control; have sometimes resorted to

trickery and oppression ; have displayed an ostentatious luxury and extravagance that have suggested residence in a different social world. On the other side, employees, especially when under the influence of Socialist and Syndicalist theorists, have adopted an attitude which has made friendship impossible ; they have kept bad time, done bad work, injured machines, restricted output, grouched and malingered, until the conduct of industry has been rendered almost impracticable.

This deplorable attitude is to some extent due to that false theoretical separation between Capital and Labour already alluded to. Even in the realm of economic abstractions the two are not wholly separable ; for Labour is a form of Capital, and Capital is a mode of service. But in the realm of actual life the two are not separable at all : every Labourer is to some extent a Capitalist—he possesses clothes, tools, various kinds of economised wealth that aid him in his productive activity ; similarly the immense majority of Capitalists are also in some form or other Labourers.

The two things most urgently necessary for the complete re-harmonisation of Capital and Labour are, first, that owners of Capital should abandon habits of extravagance, luxury, and idleness into which they may have sunk, and should use both their wealth and their ability in the service of the community ; and, secondly, that Labour should become more thrifty, should take advantage of the many facilities which exist for saving and investment, and so should gradually come to own, as it easily might, the controlling portion of the capital employed in industry.

The present position is not unhopeful ; for, as a great employer of labour recently said : " The wilder and more extreme elements of the Labour movement are being rejected by the great mass of working people, and as a result there is a closing up of the breach between the employer and his workmen to meet the common menace of unemployment and general world conditions." ¹

§ 69. *The Increase of Production.*

" The menace of unemployment and general world conditions " both alike demand the close co-operation of Capital and Labour in order to increase production and to lower its cost. Goods made in Britain are now in general so scanty and so expensive that few people, either at home or abroad, can afford to buy them. Hence immobile stocks and wide unemployment. This prohibitive expensiveness is due primarily to the fact that the output of British Labour is so low.

First, as to goods produced for the foreign market. Lord Milner has remarked that " it is a significant, if unpleasant, fact, revealed by the Census of Production in this country and the United States, that the output of the individual worker in the chief industries common to both countries is twice as great in the United States as it is in Great Britain," and he adds a note to the effect that " the British Census of Production of 1907 estimates the average net output of industrial workers at £103 per head ; the American Census of 1909 at £262 per head." ² Part of this paralysing discrepancy could no doubt, as Lord

¹ P. J. Pybus in *The Times*, September 21, 1923.

² Milner, *Questions of the Hour*, p. 59.

Milner suggests, be remedied by a more extensive employment of machinery ; but part of it is due to a deliberate restriction of output by misguided working men. Speaking of this feature, almost unknown in America, Mr. B. G. Montgomery, the American student of European Labour problems, says : " This tendency towards deliberate restriction of output has its origin primarily in the fear of unemployment ; but so far from protecting the workers from this evil, the *ca' canny* policy has actually exposed them to it by making industrial competition with other countries more difficult or even impossible."¹ In particular, the restriction of output by the miners is deadly in its cumulative consequences : it not only prevents British coal from finding or keeping Continental markets, it also hampers and handicaps every industry into which the cost of coal enters as a factor. Professor E. V. Arnold of Bangor thinks that the miners could treble their output if they cared to do so.² Mr. Ellis Barker says that " by doubling their output and dismissing redundant miners, British coal prices could easily be reduced to £1 or less per ton."³ When one remembers what the Miners' Federation has done during the past five years to disorganise British industry by strikes, and to prevent its revival by refusing to allow its members to work harder, or longer, or more economically, one is disposed to say that among the causes of our present unemployment the fatuous policy and fatal acts of the Miners' Federation come easily first.⁴

¹ Montgomery, *British and Continental Labour Policy*, p. 161.

² Arnold, *Co-operation for the Mining Industry*, p. 11.

³ Barker, in *Spectator*, September 24, 1921.

⁴ Cf. Cox, *Economic Liberty*, p. 31 : " Mr. Duncan Graham, Labour M.P. for the Hamilton Division, addressing a meeting at Larkhall on June 1,

Secondly, with respect to industries which are not subject to foreign competition. Here the case is equally bad. The typical example is the Building Trade. The work crying out to be done is almost limitless; half a million new houses are wanted; the majority of old houses are in need of repair. If prices were reasonably low the demand for factories, shops, stations, garages, and countless other types of buildings would be simply prodigious. Work would make work: builders' merchants, carpenters, painters, metal workers, and ultimately nearly all the industrial population of the kingdom would be called into activity. But no! Prices are kept artificially and prohibitively high, partly by monopolists of materials, but primarily by the operative builders who have reduced to a specialised craft the art of appearing to work without actually doing so. Says Mr. William Graham, Labour M.P. for Edinburgh: "British brick-laying is at the moment the classic example of restriction of output. It is alleged that when men were on piece-work in 1885 the number of bricks laid in plain walling per worker per day varied from 1200 to 1500; in 1912 it was round about 600 per day, while in 1920 it was 300 or less."¹ Mr. Charles Markham of Chesterfield, also writing in 1920, stated that the companies with which he was connected urgently required over 3000 houses, but that they

1919, advised his hearers not to exert themselves, but to do as little as possible, and to see that they got as much money as possible for it." A pamphlet entitled *The Country and Labour*, published in 1920, states that "the output of coal per man employed in the collieries has shrunk from 256 tons per annum in 1913 to 203 tons in 1920; and the wages part of the mere mining cost of raising coal has risen from 6s. 4d. to 22s. 8d. per ton. In the United States the output per man was 650 tons of coal per annum."

¹ Graham, *Wages of Labour*, p. 40.

simply could not get them at any tolerable price because of the scandalous behaviour of the Bricklayers' Union. So far did they carry the craft of ca' canny that a bricklayer and his labourer managed to keep up a semblance of motion on 27 bricks an hour (which meant that each brick cost over $1\frac{1}{2}$ d. to lay).¹ In America the average number of bricks laid per hour is 170—more than the average half-day's work in England. As to what might be, Mr. Graham notes that "under the most favourable conditions of an advanced scientific management it is said to be possible to lay 350 bricks *per hour*"—more than the whole day's output of the average English bricklayer and his labourer.² It would seem to be not unfair to describe the immoral and anti-social ailment from which the Bricklayers' Union (in common with other similar bodies) is suffering as "The Sickness of an Acquisitive Society," and to condemn the high wages which it demands and receives in return for its slow and scanty output as the reward of "functionless labour." If bricklayers are still to be regarded as workmen, Mr. Tawney's remark that "though workmen give much they get little"³ would appear to be exactly reversed. If their selfish exclusiveness and masterly inactivity is a typical Guild illustration of the same writer's generalisation that "the meaning of industry is the service of man,"⁴ let us pray for the day when Labour will cease to think of the service of man, and will devote its energies to the less lofty task of working fairly and earning an honest living.

¹ Markham, *Letter to The Times*, May 27, 1920.

² Graham, *loc. cit.*

³ Tawney, *Acquisitive Society*, p. 39.

⁴ Tawney, *op. cit.* p. 38.

§ 70. *The "Work Fund" Fallacy.*

Among the political economists of a hundred years ago there prevailed a peculiar illusion known as the "Wages Fund" theory. It was to the effect that at any given moment there existed a definite and limited amount of capital available for the payment of wages, and consequently that if any group of labourers, by combination or otherwise, secured a rise in the rate of their remuneration, other groups elsewhere had inevitably to suffer a diminution.¹ This false and pernicious theory has wholly been abandoned; but unfortunately in the imaginations of large sections of Labour its place has been taken by a closely analogous error to which the term the "Work Fund" theory has been aptly applied.

According to this theory there is at any given time a certain fixed and limited amount of work requiring to be done, irrespective of cost, and consequently if one man dawdles and does little there will be more for another man to dawdle at; whereas, on the contrary, if one man works hard and does more than his share he is depriving some mate of his job. "Hard work makes fewer jobs" is one of the aphorisms which embodies this plausible and widespread, but fallacious and disastrous, doctrine. Its prevalence accounts for the frequent cases in which trade unions demand the dismissal of workmen who work too strenuously and produce too much, or fine them in proportion to their excess, or prohibit overtime, or agitate for ever-shortening hours of ever-slackening and less-productive labour. It is not too much to

¹ Cf. J. S. Mill, *Political Economy*, book ii. chap xi., and a note in A. Marshall's *Economics of Industry*, at end of book vi chap. ii.

say that the "Work Fund" fallacy and the demoralising practices to which it gives rise are gnawing the heart out of British industry, and reducing the working men who are its victims to an unprecedented degradation. "Ca' canny, or organised shirking," says Mr. Shaw Desmond in his courageous book, "is the dry rot of modern labour, the thing that is eating out its morale."¹ And not only is it destroying its morale or character, it is also rendering widespread destitution and a general lowering of the standard of living inevitable. For it is sapping the sources of the only fund from which wages of any sort can be paid.

So serious is the situation that some of the wiser Labour leaders, *e.g.* Messrs. Clynes, Thomas, Brownlie, and Bowerman, make bold to warn their followers of the folly of this ca' canny policy. Their warnings are ignored; and by such powerful demagogues as Mr. Robert Williams and Mr. Tom Mann are denounced as "infamous."

Until the truth that "work makes work" is fully realised and acted upon; until it is recognised that a reduction in the cost of commodities commonly means an immense increase in demand; until all restrictions upon energy and output are removed, and men are encouraged to work as hard and efficiently as they can; until, in a word, social sanity, common honesty, and economic freedom are restored, industrial progress is out of the question. But, on the other hand, as Mr. Ellis Barker well says, "Let Labour give a full day's work for a fair day's pay, and there will be no unemployment. Instead, there will be an unprecedented scarcity of labour because the

¹ Desmond, *Labour : the Giant with the Feet of Clay*, p. 45.

world is starving for goods and services.”¹ Mr. Montgomery, the American observer, says the same thing: “When the workers once begin to realise that high efficiency in production, and increased output, are the only sure means by which a lasting improvement in their standard of living can be secured, then there will be no limit to the industrial development of Great Britain.”²

Finally, let me conclude this section with quotations from three Socialist members of Parliament. If the victims of the “Work Fund” theory will not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they are not likely to be reached by any words of mine. (1) Mr. Sidney Webb says: “Shall we ever get rid of the fallacy that there is only a definite quantity available of what we want; and that what one man gains another loses? Thousands of workmen still vaguely believe in what is called the ‘Lump of Labour Theory’; that employment is a limited quantity; and that every man at work is doing some fellow out of a job.” He then proceeds effectively to demonstrate the falsity of the theory.³ (2) Mr. Philip Snowden remarks that “Production is the basis of the whole economic and financial system. It is the only source from which wages can be paid. Increased output may benefit the capitalists: it probably will. But without increased production the workers will go on riding the merry-go-round, and will get off where they started.”⁴ (3) Mr. F. W. Pethick Lawrence utters the sound generalisation which every student of economics should ponder until he perceives its far-

¹ *Spectator*, September 24, 1921.

² Montgomery, *British and Continental Labour Policy*, p. 163.

³ *Labour Press Service*, April 1922.

⁴ Quoted Desmond, *Labour: the Giant*, etc., p. 46.

reaching significance: "In reality, over-production in the ordinary sense of the word is quite impossible."

§ 71. *Obstacles to Prosperity.*

Belief in the erroneous "Work Fund" theory is usually accompanied by a pathetic but equally fallacious faith that somewhere or other, locked up in the coffers of the idle rich, there exist vast untapped reservoirs of wealth which have only to be discovered and dispersed to render the whole community comfortable and happy. It is a paralysing illusion, which any careful study of statistics at once dissipates.¹ "Exact calculations have shown," says Professor E. V. Arnold, "that if all this 'surplus wealth' had been divided up in 1911 amongst the wage-earners, it could not have raised weekly wages by a greater sum than 2s. 6d. a week."² Again: "Professor Bowley has shown that the total income of Great Britain in 1913 equally divided among the population would have yielded only £154 for an average family."³ Once more, Mr. J. A. Hobson, writing in 1917, showed impressively and conclusively that the national dividend, if shared out equally, would yield only £34 a head.⁴ There is no fund here for supporting limitless hordes of dependents; for guaranteeing minimum wages irrespective of output; for increasing old age pensions; for endowing maternity; for building houses that pay no rent; for providing free bounties on a lavish scale for a thriftless and parasitic populace

¹ It is also an illusion which tragic experience has effectively dissipated in Russia.

² Arnold, *Co-operation for the Mining Industry*, p. 9.

³ Harold Wright, *Population*, p. 165.

⁴ Hobson, *The Fight for Democracy*, pp. 23-25.

which denounces and defies the State when it exercises authority, yet claims maintenance at its hands in days of adversity as a natural right. Well says Mr. W. B. Faraday : " The increase of wealth depends on increased production, and unless more wealth is produced no scheme of social reform could possibly succeed." ¹

What are the causes which prevent this vitally necessary increase of wealth ? The more important would seem to be the following. First and foremost must be placed that deliberate restriction of output and that deplorable practice of "ca' canny" on the part of Labour which have just been described. With these must be included all the numerous trade union customs and regulations which hamper economic freedom, prevent improvement of processes, obstruct scientific management, and handicap efficiency. It is lamentable, as has been before remarked, that hitherto trade unions have done so little to assist production, and so much to restrain it. Their action, though sometimes intelligible, is the result of a short-sighted and ultimately suicidal policy. Secondly, and in the same category, must be noted and condemned the restrictive and monopolistic action of the many trusts and combines which are formed for the purpose of crushing competition, limiting output, enhancing prices, and securing complete control of markets. There is need of their much more stringent supervision and control in the interests of the community. Third comes the manifold hindrances to freedom of exchange—with all the advantages of enhanced wealth and mutual goodwill that flow from it—due to the insane barrier-walls of

¹ Faraday, *Democracy and Capital*, p. 281.

tariffs erected by all-too-many governments of the world at the behest of interested industrial groups. It is impossible to overestimate the mischief done to mankind by this capitalist form of the nationalisation of industry. It has impeded the natural development of manufactures; has generated international frictions; has introduced corruption into politics; has vastly aggravated the poverty of the world. It is a most regrettable reversion to an exasperating entanglement from which sixty years ago mankind seemed almost to have freed itself.

But, finally, behind these three great groups of obstructive causes—Trade Unions, Trusts, and Tariffs—there lie the deep-seated intellectual, moral, and spiritual diseases of this distracted and perplexing age. Before dealing with these, however, I must end this chapter by indicating what, in the opinion of competent observers, are the immediate requirements, within the range of industry itself, necessary to secure a revival of trade, and a consequent partial return to prosperity and wealth.

§ 72. *How to revive Trade.*

The three keys to the immediate opening of a new era of industrial prosperity are in the hands of Labour, Capital, and the State respectively. All three must co-operate to unlock the closed door, or it will remain shut. Without their joint and several permission Scientific Industry, which is panting for freedom of enterprise and large productivity, cannot secure her necessary liberty. If we ask what precisely the three have to do, it may be answered generally that the Trade Unions should abandon their restrictive prac-

tices and obstructive customs ; that the Trusts should drop their monopolies and cease from profiteering ; and that the States of the world should sweep away their obnoxious tariffs and leave their people free to buy and sell where and as their interests impel them. Unfortunately, however, this answer, though it would point us in the right direction, would not lead us far along it. It is necessary to appeal beyond the Trade Union Executives, the Boards of Directors, and the Permanent State Officials immediately concerned, to the great sound body of public opinion, and especially of working-class opinion, that ultimately controls our modern democratic polity.

1. It is necessary for Labour—that is, the vast genuine body of working men and women who are ready and eager to render honest service in return for fair wages—to rescue their Trade Unions from the hands of the Socialist and Syndicalist oligarchies who have captured them ; to purge them of politics ; to restore democratic government in them—for, as Mr. R. H. Tawney says in another connection, “ men should not be ruled by an authority which they cannot control ” ;¹ to reform the scandals of the ballot system now in vogue, by securing secrecy, drawing up proper electoral rolls, excluding boys and girls under twenty-one from the vote, appointing impartial returning-officers, and seeing that ballot papers are honestly drafted ; to safeguard the Trade Union funds from the present reckless squandering ; and, finally, to use the Unions as the great instrument for the reorganisation and revival of British industry. If the Trade Unions can be converted from Fighting Machines into Co-operative Societies ; can be turned

¹ Tawney, *Acquisitive Society*, p. 8.

from war to peace ; can be persuaded to use their large accumulations of capital for developing industry instead of destroying it ; can be made to see that the way to secure control of trade and to achieve economic self-government is by investment and not by expropriation—then, indeed, will a day of new hope have dawned for Great Britain.

2. But if Labour changes its attitude, it will be necessary for Capital to effect a change not less complete. Cordial co-operation, frank fraternisation, a new humanisation of relations, must take the place of that militant unfriendliness and vigilant antagonism which the belligerence of the Trade Unions under their Revolutionary Dictators has lately rendered inevitable. There are many signs that sane Trade Union opinion now desires friendly alliance. To this end Whitley Councils, Industrial Courts, and a possible National Council—a Parliament of Labour—offer themselves as invaluable means. They should make possible a publicity in all matters of money and management which will allay jealousy and suspicion ; and should render feasible some system of payment by results—the only permanently practicable system. Then, indeed, would Labour and Capital—no longer represented by separate classes in the community, but fused into a single homogeneous whole—be able to embark with cheerful and confident enterprise to revive with cheap plenty the languishing home market, to develop the vast potential markets of the British Empire, and to recover some hold over the lost markets of the outer world. The four great industrial needs of the moment are, first, *energy*, that is, limitless hard work ; secondly, *efficiency*, that is, a trained skill which makes work effective ; thirdly,

enterprise, that is, a spirit of invention and adventure ; and finally, *economy*, that is, a general abstinence from extravagance and waste, and a widespread devotion to saving and investment.

3. In this revival Governments must play a part. But their proper part is mainly negative. Many recent and painful experiences have shown that the positive participation of the State in industry and commerce is disastrous in the extreme. The fusion of politics with economics, *i.e.* of government with business, whether it be by nationalisation or by protection, means the corruption of politics and the ruin of business. The function of the State in this sphere is to safeguard the interests of the community as a whole, and the working class in particular, by maintaining international peace, by encouraging freedom of commerce, by stabilising the exchanges, by regulating the currency, by establishing an efficient consular service, by setting up and preserving a high standard of honour and justice, and by supervising and controlling the conditions of labour.

CHAPTER XIII

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS PROGRESS

"Fundamentally the problem of democracy is a religious problem ; for the constant subordination of personal interests to the general good can only exist in a community that has a religious background."—Bishop MASTERMAN.

"The progress of humanity must depend in the future, as in the past, upon the improvement of the individual man."—Sir ARTHUR CLAY.

"Work is the real solution of the unemployed problem."—Mr. T. CUSACK.

"Nothing has caused so much needless suffering among civilised nations, and has so completely neutralised the effects that culture should have in promoting happiness, as the swollen birth-rates of the nineteenth century."—Dean INGE.

"A large reduction in the birth-rate would immediately solve many of the social problems which are now perplexing the minds of Englishmen."—Mr. HAROLD COX.

"The most urgent problem of to-day is how to limit and discourage the over-fertility of the mentally and physically defective."—Mrs. SANGER.

§ 73. *The Deeper Causes of Destitution.*

It appears, then, that the chief superficial hindrances to industrial prosperity and social progress are Trade Union restrictions, Trust monopolies, and Government interferences, and that consequently the three most urgent economic needs of the moment are freedom of labour, freedom of enterprise, and freedom of exchange. Behind and beneath these, however, lie deeper causes, intellectual, moral, and spiritual, of which these surface causes are but the fruits and

the manifestations. Society is suffering from grave intellectual defects, from grave moral diseases, from grave spiritual decline.

1. *Intellectual Defects*.—The problems of life in this modern world of ours have become almost insoluble in their vastness, their complexity, their number, and their difficulty. The external unification of the human race effected in the nineteenth century by means of steam transport, postal services, news agencies, and electric cables, has thrown upon the statesman, the business man, the student of learning in all its branches, a burden of toil and responsibility incomparably greater than that borne by any generation of his predecessors. Every political question is world-wide in its ramifications; all movements of money and fluctuations in exchanges have subtle repercussions in every quarter of the globe; new knowledge and fresh ideas pour in from east, west, north, and south, expressed in a babel of discordant tongues. No human brain has the capacity to cope with the avalanche of novelties that incessantly descends upon it. Comparatively few human brains have sufficient capacity to recognise their helplessness, and so to play for "safety first." There is a pressing demand for first-rate intelligence in every department of human activity: every man of first-rate intelligence is amply worth the enormous rewards which his services may command. But the supply of first-rate intelligence seems to grow smaller rather than larger. The vacant places at the summit of politics, commerce, science, and philosophy—in spite of the unparalleled prizes which they offer—remain largely unclaimed. The lower ranks, on the other hand, are congested with the semi-competent.

2. *Moral Diseases*.—The growing disproportion between the magnitude of the problems of life and the capacity of the human mind to grapple with them, is immensely aggravated by the prevalence of grave moral diseases. If all men were pure, honest, steady, diligent, reasonable, self-restrained, brotherly, it would be possible to make political experiments and run social risks which in present circumstances would be speedily fatal. The bane of all reform movements is the moral corruption which sponges upon them and the moral degeneration which they themselves tend to foster. In our own country the deadly “trinity of evil” which degrades the condition of so large a portion of our population is the threefold scourge of excessive drinking, gambling, and impurity. The vice of intemperance not only debilitates the mind and body of countless thousands of our countrymen; it also swallows up many millions of pounds which would otherwise be employed in capitalising productive industry. The vice of gambling is one of the most depraving and anti-social of iniquities. Its very principle is getting without giving; money-making divorced from service. If once it grips a man’s soul it renders him incapable of honest labour, and vitiates all his relations with his fellow-men. Finally, the vice of impurity, lamentably widespread to-day, is deadly in its devastations. It ruins its victims, body and soul, weakening the one with loathsome diseases, and degrading the other to a level below the brutes. No amelioration of social conditions can do much good until Society is purged of this “trinity of evil.”

3. *Spiritual Decline*.—The prevalence of these grave moral diseases is accompanied by a marked decline in spirituality, and by a serious increase in

devotion to the material paraphernalia of life. To what is this due ?

§ 74. *The Population Problem.*

Preachers and moralists, commenting upon the grossness and materialism of this money-grubbing and pleasure-loving age, assign many and various causes to the phenomena which they agree in recognising and lamenting. Space fails me to discuss them all ; but two seem to stand out pre-eminent. On the one hand, the rich find that their wealth places within their reach unprecedented and innumerable sources of enjoyment alluring to the senses : swift travel, luxurious mansions, delicate foods and drinks, exhilarating sports, fascinating amusements—everything, in short, to pamper the body and cause neglect of the soul. On the other hand, the poor find that the struggle for subsistence which during the nineteenth century tended to become less acute, has taken a decisive turn for the worse, and is becoming steadily more severe ; so that once again anxiety concerning the mere means of decent existence is keen.

As to the rich, it is necessary to recognise the fact that in the present day of world-markets it is perfectly possible for great wealth to be won entirely honourably and honestly in return for valuable services rendered to an extensive community. Who shall say that such industrial geniuses as Mr. Henry Ford in America or Lord Leverhulme in England have not amply earned, by benefits conferred upon the public, every jot and tittle of the large fortunes which they have made ? But it is equally necessary to point out that the possession of great wealth imposes

a heavy burden of responsibility upon its possessors, especially in these days when the world as a whole is poor. It is the bounden duty of the rich "to scorn delights and live laborious days"; to abjure self-indulgence, luxury, and waste; to re-convert their wealth into capital in order to stimulate industry, extend employment, and cheapen the necessities of the less fortunate.

As to rich and poor alike, we are brought face to face with the population question. The world in general, and Great Britain in particular, is over-full. This novel but dominant fact is due primarily to a remarkable fall in the death-rate, resultant upon the immense advance in sanitary and medical science. Fewer infants die; more adults live to old age. Thus every year the excess of births over deaths becomes greater, and the net population increases by leaps and bounds. In 1801 the inhabitants of England and Wales numbered about 9 millions; by 1851 they had doubled, that is, there were about 18 millions; by 1911 they had *doubled again* and had reached 36 millions, and still the portentous progression goes on. In 1921 the excess of births over deaths was 390,000 (over a thousand a day)—that is to say, the equivalent of the population of a large city was added in a single year. At this rate of increase, which has been fairly steadily maintained for the past century, in three hundred years the people of Great Britain will be more in numbers than the present population of the whole world. Which is impossible. Long before that date is reached one of two things must have occurred: either the present birth-rate must have been drastically reduced, or an appalling catastrophe must have devastated the island.

Already Great Britain is congested. It cannot provide food for more than one-third of its inhabitants; for the rest it is dependent on imports which have to be paid for by its manufactures. The supply of these vital imports tends to fall off and the price to rise; because the food-growing lands are themselves being filled up with a hungry populace. Britain is finding it increasingly more difficult to sell her manufactured wares (made artificially expensive as they are by trade unions, trusts, and tariffs); her workshops stand idle, and those who should be busy within them join the ranks of the unemployed and live at the cost of those who still remain occupied. In particular, at a time when, owing to the development of machinery, the demand for unskilled labour is rapidly declining, it is precisely the ranks of unskilled labour—that is to say, the ranks of the mentally, morally, and physically unfit—that are flooded to overflowing with impoverished life.

Here we are near the tap-root of the social problem. Almost any matter of environment—houses, hospitals, schools, anything—could be dealt with easily and successfully, were it not for the daily torrent of superfluous infants, legitimate and illegitimate, that pours in upon us, largely by way of the slums. Every twenty-four hours in this small island one thousand more mouths to feed! one thousand more bodies to clothe and house! It is not enough to say that for every mouth there are two hands. Hands must have (beside skill to direct them) food to support them and raw material in front of them. The world's supplies of food and raw materials begin to run low. The pressure of population upon the means of subsistence has commenced to manifest

itself upon a scale of unprecedented and appalling magnitude.¹

§ 75. *Social Reform.*

Socialists as a rule have been, and still are, culpably blind to the menacing significance of the population problem. Marxians in particular recognise it only so far as to denounce those who urge upon the proletariat some restraint in the exercise of their proletarian proclivities: they actually encourage the populace to breed prolifically, with the avowed and sinister purpose of deepening their misery, increasing the army of the desperate, and hastening the social revolution. Fabian Socialists are not so diabolical. They admit the menace, but lay the blame on the capitalists! Mr. Bernard Shaw, in his antiquated Fabian Essay of 1888, perceives the peril of what he calls "a plague of men," and says of the proletariat that "they breed like rabbits; and their poverty breeds filth, ugliness, dishonesty, disease, obscenity, drunkenness, and murder."² Mr. Sidney Webb has grace enough to allow that the sweating of Labour in the early nineteenth century would have been impossible but for "a reckless unrestrained breeding" in the urban slums.³ Mr. H. G. Wells, who is a biologist as well as a Socialist, says emphatically to the infatuated generation which goes on producing children regardless of either their quantity or their quality: "We cannot go on giving you health,

¹ "How some fifty millions are to be supported in our small island without the prosperous world-wide trade that we have enjoyed for a century seems to me to be the most awful problem that has ever been presented to a nation" (Mr. Frederic Harrison in *The Observer*, May 21, 1922).

² *Fabian Essays*, p. 21.

³ Webb, *Decay of Capitalist Civilisation*, p. 80.

freedom, enlargement, wealth, if all our gifts to you are to be swamped by an indiscriminate torrent of progeny. We want fewer and better children who can be reared up to their full possibilities in unencumbered homes, and we cannot make the social life and the world-peace we are determined to make, with the ill-bred, ill-trained swarms of inferior citizens that you inflict upon us.”¹ Even the Labour Seven who propound the latest version of the Utopian illusions of Socialism, while they refuse to follow the logic of their confession, are constrained to confess that “no Socialist community could exist in which there was reckless or unthinking procreation of children.”²

Now “reckless and unthinking procreation of children” is precisely what there is at the present time—and, indeed, always has been at all times. Until recently, as we have already explained, it did not matter so much. It did not matter *so much*: because a high birth-rate was accompanied by a high death-rate, and the population remained fairly stable. For example, the population of England and Wales is supposed to have increased between 1600 and 1700 by only 500,000—an increase in a *century* not much greater than the increase in a *year* at the present day. The annual death-rate in the seventeenth century was over 33 per 1000; modern science has reduced it to somewhere about 12 per 1000. When I say that reckless breeding did not matter “so much” in these old days of unmanageable plagues, pestilences, and famines, I do not mean that it did not matter at all. Even in those days it entailed a vast amount of

¹ Wells, Introduction to Mrs. Sanger's *Pivot of Civilisation*, p. 15.

² *The Labour Party's Aim*, p. 95.

needless human agony. But to-day it makes the social problem insoluble. It is no use emptying slums; they fill up again as fast as they are cleared. It is no use aiding emigration; the largest annual exodus does not drain away one-fifth part of the incoming flood. As for maternity homes, municipal milk, and endowed motherhood—under the false guise of benevolence they aggravate the already intolerable evil. If there is to be any social salvation for this over-peopled island, this incessant torrent must be stemmed.

Here is a task for moralists, preachers, and reformers: to teach continence, restraint, responsibility, control; to bring home to the consciences of all how wicked it is to bring beings into the world for whom there is no adequate home, no place in industry, no probable provision. It is a difficult and expensive thing to rear and train a child from infancy to manhood. No condemnation can be too strong for those callous sensualists, to whatsoever class they belong, who beget or bear children for whom they cannot themselves adequately provide.

§ 76. *Educational Reform.*

The population question was rightly admitted by the Christian Socialists, and is rightly admitted by their learned historian, Dr. C. E. Raven, to be “the root question of all social science.”¹ It is therefore the question upon which, above all others, there is most need of a sound civic education. Such books as Mr. Harold Cox’s *Population Problem*, Mr. Harold Wright’s *Population*, Mrs. Margaret Sanger’s *Pivot*

¹ Raven, *Christian Socialism*, p. 38.

of *Civilisation*, and even the excessively alarmist *Revolt against Civilisation*, by Mr. Lottrop Stoddard, should be placed in the hands of all teachers of men, and in the hands of all such students as are of an age and a maturity to face the facts of life. It is desirable that mankind should attain to control of its destiny rather by means of education and self-discipline than by means of authority and external compulsion. Except in the case of the irresponsible feeble-minded,¹ who, in the interests both of themselves and of the community, should be segregated or sterilised, social salvation should come from the dissemination of sound knowledge and religious education.

It is vital that this education should instil the principles of self-control and self-reliance. One of the most radical of the numerous defects of Socialism is, as has already been pointed out, the fact that it does so little to encourage energy, enterprise, thrift, self-help, and individual activity; and that it tends to lead its victims with so fatal a lethargy to repose upon other people, and to look to extraneous sources for the supplies of all they want. It tends to create (as recently at Poplar) what Mr. R. H. Tawney, in another connection, describes as "a class of pensioners upon industry, who levy toll upon its product, but contribute nothing to its increase, and who are not merely tolerated, but applauded and protected with assiduous care,"² by Socialistic Boards of Guardians. The purpose of education should be to enable the

¹ "The proportion of weak-minded people in this country has increased until it is now about 1 in every 248" (*Report of the Central Association for the Care of the Mentally Defective*, 1918). The feeble-minded—who always produce feeble-minded children—are the most prolific of all classes in the community.

² Tawney, *Acquisitive Society*, p. 37.

citizen to take his honourable and independent place in the social organism, and to provide—by means of wages or dividends duly received in return for service or sacrifice honestly rendered—for himself and his family.

Too much has the “dole” habit grown upon our people. Too much have politicians, eager for votes at any price, promised large payments of public money to those who would place them in power. Too often does the euphemism “Social Reform” cover what is neither more nor less than a gigantic piece of corrupt bribery—an attempt to purchase the votes of the thriftless by the promise of a raid upon the savings of the thrifty. Mr. Austin Hopkinson justly says that “our present troubles are due to the policy of taking capital out of the hands of those who would use it to create wealth, and distributing it in the form of doles to those who give no return for it.”¹ The Head of the Salvation Army, in a courageous foreword to the Annual [1923] Report of the Social Work of the great organisation which he commands, having spoken of the evils of unemployment, remarks: “But I am led sometimes to wonder whether what is called the dole—that is, the indiscriminate distribution of money for which no labour is required in return—is not almost, if not quite, as great a misfortune. I do not think it is possible for the ordinary reader of these lines to imagine the moral decline, the mischievous influence over all alike, which spring from this evil influence. For once, at least, we see how a remedy may be far worse than a disease.” Both would, no doubt, agree with Mr. R. H. Tawney when he concludes, in another connection, that “the abolition of payments that are made without any corresponding

¹ Hopkinson, *Hope of the Workers*, p. 20.

economic service is thus one of the indispensable conditions both of economic efficiency and industrial peace.”¹

Sound education in the history of Poor Law administration—especially of the disastrous half-century of doles that necessitated the passing of the admirable Act of 1834; an Act whose sane principles urgently need revival and reinforcement—sound education in Economic History generally, is required to counteract the pernicious influence of the erroneous theories and garbled facts that are disseminated by the prejudices of Socialist politicians and the shameless propaganda of Labour Colleges.

§ 77. *Moral Reform.*

Socialism, Syndicalism, and Anarchism are all of them foreign diseases alien from the British constitution: the first is German, the second French, the third Russian. The people of this country have, happily, when they have caught them, caught them in forms less violent than their originals, viz. in the forms of Fabianism, Guildism, and Conscientious Objectionableness. But all the same these three social diseases have played havoc with the body politic and economic, and have effected deadly and disastrous schisms in the community. The organs upon which they have for the most part made their most serious seizures are the great Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies. These splendid institutions are the glory of the British working classes. They have been developed by them on a firm financial basis, and they are capable of becoming, under wise

¹ Tawney, *Acquisitive Society*, p. 167.

and strong control, potent instruments of emancipation and of wealth. They have not been without their defects. Like the early English constitution, they have been more efficient in their lower ranges than in their upper. Their wide democratic constituencies have never yet fully realised the importance of securing at the top the highest obtainable skill, of paying market price for it, and of giving it a free hand. Two consequences have flowed from the central weakness thus caused: one has been that both Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies have failed to take advantage of the large commercial opportunities which have frequently lain open to them;¹ the other has been that they have too easily and completely fallen a prey to revolutionary politicians, or anti-politicians, who have captured their organisations and secured their funds for their own subversive ends. I have already noted the fatal results of this capture upon the Unions and Societies themselves. What I wish to note here is the deplorable effect upon the moral character of their members. Committed as they are to the vicious dogma of the class war, they are deliberately trained to practices which embody the very ethics of Hades: they are educated in hatred; incited to violence; encouraged in slackness; instigated to dishonesty; impelled to unfaithfulness. Further, they are involved in the meshes of a politics which is merely sectional and grossly material. The moral as well as the material

¹ Sir Charles Macara tells us how during the War, when the cotton operatives received a bonus of 6s. in the pound, he "begged of them at the time to take up this share in prosperity as a monetary interest in the industry in which they were employed." They had not sufficient insight and foresight to do so. "I am afraid," adds Sir Charles Macara, "the money was squandered and dissipated without any real or lasting benefit" (Macara, *The Industrial Situation*, p. 29).

interests of the working classes urgently demand the recovery of their great Unions and Societies from the possession of the spoiler.

Not less urgent is the moral regeneration of the middle and upper class—and particularly that impure and unreformed part of it known as the “new rich.” In days before class-consciousness became so acute as it is at the present time, the old gentry of the counties and the long-established burghers of the towns had a strong and controlling sense of public duty. If they were powerful, they used their power in the interests of firm and just government; if they were wealthy, they used their riches to endow the needy and to aid the poor. That happy state of things has largely passed away. The ancient county families have been ruined by confiscatory taxation and exterminated by war. Both they and the antique burgher families of the towns have been superseded by a class of *nouveaux riches* who inherit none of their fine civic traditions. The “new rich” have made their wealth in the midst of the class war, and they feel no obligation to share it with their avowed enemies. They enjoy their wealth precariously in the midst of threats of capital levies, enhanced income taxes, and augmented death duties. Hence too often they yield to the instinct, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow——” who knows what? Thus it comes to pass that, amid widespread poverty and unemployment, we see the disgusting spectacle of ostentatious luxury and reckless extravagance on the part of the new plutocracy. Their numbers are relatively not great, and their wealth if divided out would make little appreciable difference to any one; but the example is shocking, and the acerbation of class bitterness deplorable.

On all sides there is need of a moral reformation—need of a new spirit of social harmony, a new spirit of brotherly love, a new spirit of unselfishness and sacrifice, a new spirit of service, devotion, and mutual aid, a new spirit of austerity and self-denial. A new spirit, do I say? Yes: a new spirit, but all the same an old spirit, even the spirit of Christ.

§ 78. *Religious Reform.*

In *The Last Years of H. M. Hyndman*, as recorded by his devoted wife, occur the following remarkable words: "I used to think that Social Democracy could take the place of a religion; but now I see that human beings want something more. Religious belief, in one shape or another, will be necessary for hundreds of years yet, and we shall have to find it for them somehow." It is a pathetic spectacle, that of an aged Atheist in search of a religion, not for his own use but for the use of "human beings" whose infirmities "for hundreds of years" will require it. What sort of a religion Mr. Hyndman might have found—or, following the example of Comte, have invented—if his life had been prolonged, it is difficult to conceive; for Marxian materialism and economic determinism are not the sort of soil in which either the pearl of great price is discovered, or the fruits of the spirit are to be looked for. But this, I think, we may safely say: Mr. Hyndman's recognition of the need of religion is his recognition of the impossibility of building the new social structure on a foundation of hatred and by means of class war. The very word "religion"—from the Latin *religare*—means to bind together; and the essence of religion is the union of all men in

the common worship of some higher Power, before whose majesty all their petty differences vanish away, and in whose gracious presence all their schisms are healed. The paradox of Communism has always been its sectionalism and its ferocity : it has planned a scheme of a new society, the possibility of whose existence would depend upon the suppression of those very schismatic passions which it excites to their highest pitch of violence, and upon the dominance of those very virtues of brotherly love and large charity which its savage votaries most conspicuously lack. What Communism as run by Communists means in practice is seen in the wild conflicts which rage in the Internationals, and in the sanguinary broils which divide the Dictators of Bolshevik Russia.

The hope of the world lies not on the issue of the Armageddon of the Class War, but in the prevalence of the Gospel of Peace ; not on the triumph of either proletariat or bourgeoisie over the other, but in the recognition of the fact that the distinction between the two is utterly illusory and unreal, the figment of a disordered and irreligious imagination. The problems which the human race has to face—political, social, economic, moral—are such as to call for the closest union, the most cordial co-operation, the most patient consideration. Religion is the bond which must bind the peoples together by causing them to realise that they have spiritual affinities which link them to one another by ties that are stronger to unite than are the limited loyalties of nationality, or class, or creed to separate. This large and unifying religion transcends the formularies of all the Churches, but it is not incompatible with that which is good in any of them, any more than is a large and unifying

humanitarianism incompatible with a noble devotion to country, to sodality, to home. The individual can, indeed, best serve mankind through the medium of those associations and those faiths to which he owes direct allegiance.

There is need, however, that the religion of the Churches should purify and reform itself, if it is to play its part in the spiritual reunification of the race. The tendency of ecclesiastics, with their concentration upon systematic theology, is to emphasise diversities rather than concordances. The tendency of creeds, once rational, is to harden into rigid resistance to the growing science of the age. The tendency of mysticism, with its direct emotional contact with the immaterial, is to withdraw into lonely contemplation, regardless of the community of man. The tendency of social fellowship and fraternal service, with their anxious concern about bodily needs, is to lose their consciousness of the divine and to forget the practice of the presence of God. There is need, in short, of a reharmonisation of intellect, emotion, and will in the worship of God and the service of Man.

CHAPTER XIV

EPILOGUE

"One day the revelation in the New Testament will be realised, and the human race will be one harmonious unit."—Sir CHARLES SHERRINGTON.

"When I recall what the men did in the great battles at Mons, Ypres, and Paschendael, it does not seem to me that there is much wrong with the nation."—Sir WILLIAM ROBERTSON.

"It scarcely seems an exaggeration to say that democracy may really be regarded as an end in itself, and something to be valued with an almost religious fervour."—Professor J. S. MACKENZIE.

"It is better for a man to go wrong in freedom than to go right in chains."—Professor T. H. HUXLEY.

"Private property is the foundation of civilisation, and the extent of its distribution is the measure of a civilisation's stability and success."—Mr. NOEL SKELTON.

"To give the freest possible vent to every healthy form of enterprise ; to create such conditions of work that every man, in every grade of industry, will feel impelled to work his hardest ; to diffuse as widely as possible the habits of thrift . . . these are the only ways in which a society placed as ours is to-day can hope to extricate itself from its difficulties."—Professor RAMSAY MUIR.

§ 79. *Summary.*

THE main purpose of the writing of this book has been to plead for democracy as against direct action ; for personal freedom as against Socialism in all its protean shapes ; for faith and fellowship as against materialism and Class War. Its narrative has passed rapidly, if not lightly, over many fields of history ;

its argument has skirted the gaping mouths of innumerable pits of theory. Nowhere has the writer ventured to pause to dig the fields, or to descend the pits. His decision not to do so has been due to no disbelief in the fertility of the fields or the productiveness of the pits ; but simply to his strong desire to complete his survey of the surface, and to bring his task to a close within reasonable time. It is sometimes advantageous to attempt to include the whole of a vast landscape in a single synoptic view, in order that the number and variety of its commanding features may be made manifest to the eye of the observer, and impressed upon his consciousness.

It is hoped that, however imperfect the preceding sketch may have been, it has served to indicate the immensity and intricacy of the problems by which modern society is confronted. The problems are of two kinds. First, there are what I have called the adjectival problems, that is to say, problems of procedure. Pre-eminent among these is the fundamental question, whether we are to settle our political and economic controversies by the democratic method of discussion and vote, or by the militarist method of direct action and force. Until this question is decided once and for all nothing whatsoever can be done. For direct action and democracy are not complementary the one to the other : they are mutually exclusive. Assuming that the community continues faithful to the democratic method, we note that many minor, yet important, points of procedure remain to be determined. Such are the questions of devolution and federation ; of the constitution and powers of the second chamber ; of the limits of the franchise ; of the introduction of the new devices of propor-

tional representation and the referendum. The general contention of this book is that the British Constitution, when honestly and intelligently worked, is so excellent an instrument of democratic government that any radical change is to be deprecated; but that in order that it may produce its best results, it is necessary that the two-party division of active politicians should be restored.

Beyond these adjectival questions of procedure there lie the vast substantive problems of politics and economics. The reason why it is so vital to perfect our *organon* is that these substantive problems are so enormous and so insistent. In number they are legion, and the details of their solution are infinite in their variety. But behind them all a few broad questions of general principle can readily be discerned. It is on these that the great parties in the State are fundamentally divided; it is concerning these that the decisive debates take place, and respecting these that the supreme determinations have to be made. Among these basal issues at the present moment none is so important as that which divides the Socialist Labour Party from its opponents. The Socialist Labour Party stresses the influence of environment as the controller of character and destiny; concentrates its attention on the improvement of conditions; looks to the creation of a new system for social salvation, and seeks for means to create it in the appropriation of existing stores of wealth. The opponents of this empirical Party emphasise the moral and intellectual differences which divide men into ranks and grades of infinite diversity; lay stress on the fact that man, more than any other creature, is the maker of his own environment; insist that salvation must

come, if at all, from individual regeneration ; point out the truth that miseries of the "submerged tenth" are pre-eminently the result of their own reckless overbreeding ; and contend that good-will, hard work, thrift, self-control, sobriety, and virtues such as these, all concentrated upon the efficient and productive working of the present excellent industrial system, will suffice to remedy what is wrong with the world.

§ 80. *Conclusion.*

Now these differences of principle which divide Socialists from their opponents, though fundamental, are after all differences of degree rather than of kind. They are not like the irreconcilable differences which separate "direct actionists" from democrats. Not the most extreme Socialist would contend that the influence of heredity is wholly negligible ; not the most monocular Biologist would argue that environment is entirely unimportant. The differences, though formidable enough, are differences of emphasis, not of essence. They are arguments as to which of the two blades of a pair of scissors does the cutting.

Hence in practical politics, when once the method of discussion has been agreed upon, they ought not to be incapable of some sort of reconciliation and harmonisation. The way of peace and progress is the way of integration, unification, comprehension, creative evolution. The machinery for this necessary reconciliation and harmonisation is provided by Representative Democracy, with its underlying assumptions of organic community, free discussion, majority rule, and lawful obedience. In Representative Democracy, when its possibilities are fully

realised, the individual can retain his personality, his power of influencing his fellows, his freedom of enterprise, his faculty of self-determination. At the same time the community can organise itself, can act as a corporate person, can attain to a public opinion, a social conscience, and a general will, can establish, the conditions of the good life.

The world has need both of the free individual and the organised community. It will languish and sink into a more than Chinese stagnation if it discourages private adventure, denounces the making of fortunes, confiscates private property, frustrates and hampers the largest liberty. On the other hand, it will break up in the wildest anarchy unless the free individual consents, in close co-operation with his fellows, to work for the common weal, to derive profit only from such sources as connote service rendered, to use wealth as a trust consecrated to the public good, and to enjoy liberty as an opportunity for doing that which is right.

There is no antagonism between the Free Individual and the Democratic State. Man needs the State as the means by which alone he can secure the conditions of the good and self-sufficient life ; the State needs every good and self-sufficient citizen as the means by which alone it can secure a sound public opinion, an educated social conscience, and an operative general will.

And just as the individual man needs the Democratic State, so does the Democratic State need the large community of Humanity. Each State has its own contribution to make to the common wealth of Mankind ; no State can prosper as it ought if it cuts itself adrift from the fellowship of Nations and seeks

to realise its destiny in isolation. The same problems face the Society of Nations as face the citizens of each separate State. Are international problems to be settled by the democratic method of discussion and majority decision, or are they to be committed to the direct action of the arbitrament of war? Just as the hope of the National State rests in the fidelity of its members to the tried and proved principles of constitutional rule, so does the hope of the world reside in the substitution of the peaceful methods of reason and debate for the barbaric, antiquated, and increasingly horrible methods of war.

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(*Supplementary to that given in "Democracy at the Crossways," pp. 497-504.*)

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